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TEMPLE ART OF LATE MEDIAEVAL BENGAL

Nihar Ghosh

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Temple Art of Late Mediaeval Bengal

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Nihar Ghosh

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To the inspiring
sentiment, sacrifice and dedication
*of my beloved life partner "**Saswati**"*

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PREFACE

"We have the right in point of history, to explain with Gothe
Should this torture then torment us
Since it brings us great pleasure?
Were not through the rule of Timur
Souls devoured without measure?"

—*Karl Marx, F. Engles-Selected works-Vol-I page 439-Moscow, 1973.*

Such 'Souls' in fact devoured without measure in the socio-historical realities of late mediaeval Bengal when a contradiction between traditional and colonial-institutional applications assumed a dramatically tense form in the spirits of the subjugated people. The orthodoxy and conservatism in the essence of contemporary tradition under the dogmatic socio political framework dominated by the ruling forces became exposed to the radical social message, popular spirit of humanism under the devastating waves of Bhakti movement. People with a common vision, extra aesthetic problems (moral, political and existential) came to play a decisive role in the formation of artistic culture. Late mediaeval temples in Bengal in their external as well as internal antecedents are glaring instances of such artistic expressions concerned with images and descriptive images.

In my earlier works on "the Art of Ancient Bengal Terracottas" and "Islamic art of mediaeval Bengal Architectural embellishments" I tried to build up a sequence of tradition in the art of Bengal since prehistoric days. The present work was primarily intended to follow the said sequence covering the trends in general pertaining to all the important historical phases. It is upon the readers to examine to what extent my said mission has turned to reality. Neverthless I am extremely grateful to the esteemed readers not only in India but also at the overseas who have shown great response to my works on the two earlier phases.

The series of work had been extremely tiresome, expensive and time consuming and in fact, it has taken not only the most valuable days of my youth, but also caused financial distress. The exhaustive field works as well as frequent tours even to the far flung areas of West Bengal and Bangladesh in public transport, rickshaw van or on foot also caused me much of mental or physical strains and agony, as each and everything had to be afforded out my own pocket even including the entire cost of documentation and a part of publication costs.

All the three parts of my work have been executed simultaneously during the last twenty five years depending upon the space whenever and whereever available, though publications are being finalised seriatim according to the periodicity. Updation of datas or information wherever possible has been done in the appropriate places. Since the corpus of the work and the space is large, there are possibilities that a few discrepancies might be cropped up

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in recording of factual details and identification of certain exhibits, which is primarily due to inadvertence, and lack of knowledge. I shall be obliged if such discrepancy is pointed out to me for rectification.

At the outset, I owe to Sri Manish Chakraborty— my very intimate junior friend and a skilled photographer who took immense interest in my work and accompanied me as a best company in some of the tours even to far flung districts continuously spending a lot out of his own pocket. His selfless devotion to my work is really commendable.

In the process of implementation of the project as a whole, Prof. B. N. Mukherjee has always been very affectionate to guide me in all the important spheres and extended the best of his gestures like a true teacher in the traditional Indian perspective. Sri Utpal Chakraborty— my philosopher associate and guide extended all possible help, knowledge and also accompanied me in various tours including the tour to Bangladesh. Sri Jayanta Ghosal the best of my intimate friends who started the journey along with me twenty five years back through repeated field visits in the district of Murshidabad, stayed with me all the years doing the best of selfles services. I would expres my deep regards to them and share my sentiments of honour.

I am extremely grateful to late Tarapada Santra— who had all the time maintained a very accommodative attitude particularly in the aspect of field work.

I take the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Sri Chittaranjan Dasgupta of Bishnupur, Bankura for his valuable advice and guidance and to Sri Gautam De also of Bankura for extending their whole hearted cooperation and support. My friend and well wisher Sri Sukumar Mitra and Tahamina Khatun of Barasat also provided their heartfelt gestures and shared many vital informations.

My elder daughter Bidisha has always taken keen interest to my work and also visited many places with me and I obtained immense help from the reference of her discipline of sociological studies. The younger daughter Bipasha also helped me from time to time in various ways.

In fine, I would express my heartfelf thanks to Sri Basab Chattopadhyay and Smt Rama Chattopadhyay for extending their valued and all out co operation in making the series of publication possible in the grim days of publication business.

I convey the best of my regards to the esteemed readers.

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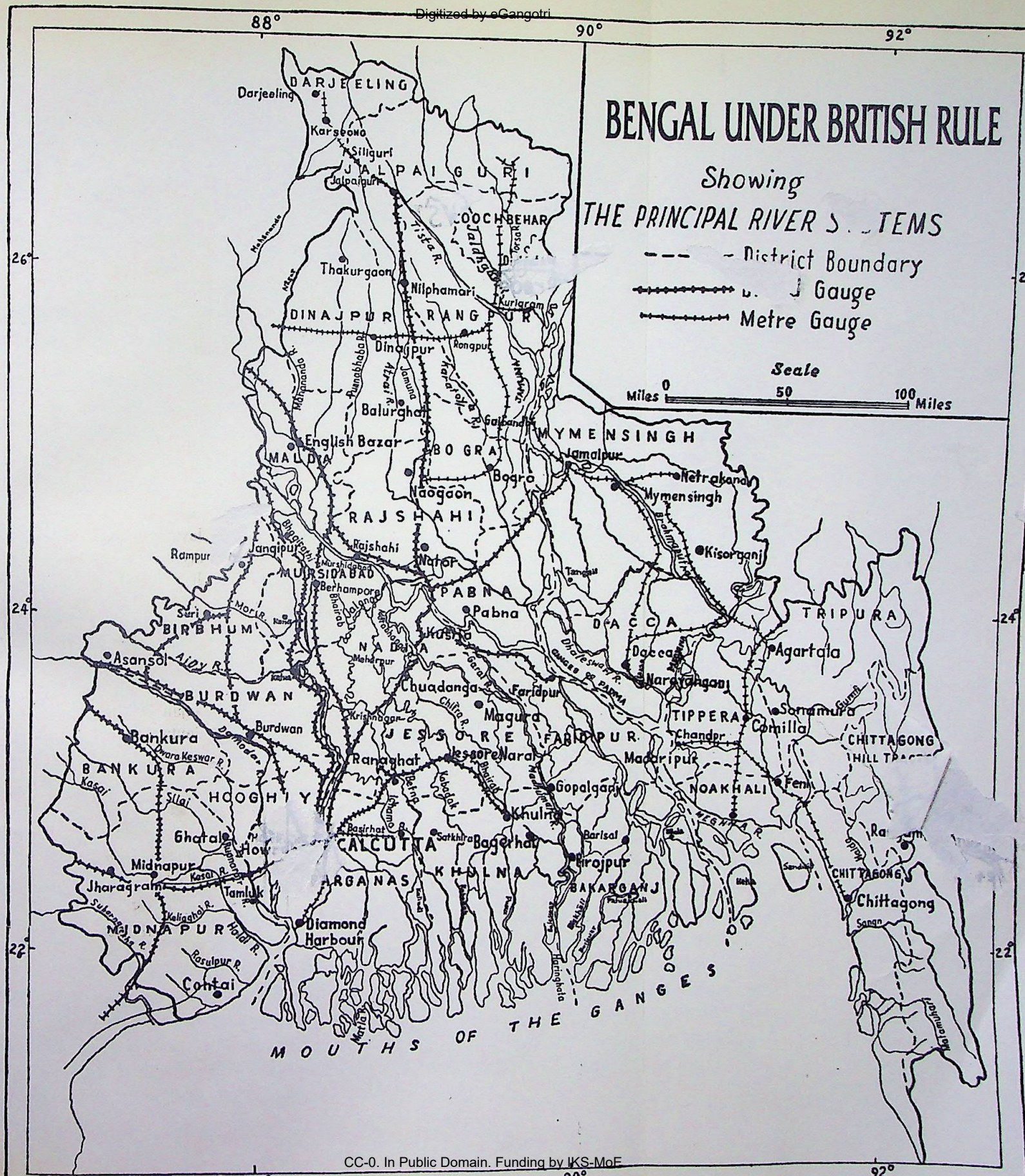

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This is generally a periphery outlined not only by a geographical perception, but also by a cultural synthesis nourished by a group of people since prechistoric past. The periphery is artificial but demarcated by the natural emancipations of people with considerable cultural achievements, which are hereditary. Both the western and eastern parts of the province of Bengal constitute the fertile base on which the superstructure of a living school of art intrinsic to a dignified quality of life, was framed up. Before our eyes, we find the immense treasures of creativity, a strong conceptualised vision of our predecessors and an indifferent or disinclined aesthetic impulse on the individualism or crude materialism.

Life here had been very easy sailing with the least of natural or supernatural hardship due to congenial location, rich alluvival soil formation and the lavish gifts of the conducive nature. The people did not have the constraints of incessant struggles against the calamities of nature and rather co existed with the flavours as well as generosity of the natural attributes. Biologically more sensitive than being in rat race of wealth and power, the people used to maintain low material ambition with contemplative attitude to the attainment of finer aspects of life.

Since prehistoric days there had been adequate evidences signifying rich civilization of the people and also the indications of enlightenment as well as effluence of social knowledge and wealth. We have already elaborately worked upon the prehistoric and ancient phases in our monograph 'Art of Ancient Bengal Terracottas' and in the later part 'Islamic Art of Mediaeval Bengal Architectural Embellishiments.' These works are merely segmental views of a very large canvas of ethno cultural diversities, in significant historical phases relating to a known spread of more than two millenium years.

The art of terracotta or baked clay was a natural innovation of the primitive men, who made its extensive use not only in utilities, but also in shaping their cognized objects of the nature through aesthetic impulse. Soil of Bengal was all along fertile for cultivation of sensitivities, passions and emotions, which facilitated transformation of conceptual as well as perceptual phenomenon like incarnation of nature of fertility and animal divinities, practices of anthropomorphism, emergence of ancestor cults and as well as therianthropism in minute details, etc. Abundant archaeological evidences excavated from Ajay— Kunur, Rupnarayan— Dwarakeshwar, Shilabati— Kangshabati basins, Bidyadhari— Jamuna— Padma— Ichamati— Adiganga basins, Atreyi— Punarbhaba— Karatoya— Mahananda basins and also at certain other identified spots, place before us the innumerable creative artworks pertaining to the prehistoric and ancient phases primarily in the medium of terracotta which is believed to be the primary medium of the common masses— both relating to the institutional and non-institutional levels.

The terrocotta plaques and artworks are important historical evidences in which influx of external trends, national or territorial characters, assimilation of all incoming and local traits including the institutional and folk cultural segments, are elaborately revealed. The medium itself over several pre historic and historic epochs constituted a primary means of man's creative pursuits, in which the sensitivities of firm belief are converted into innovative shapes as a day to day activity without much of the contemplative exercise for spiritual achievements.The aesthetic potentials of terracotta art works excavated from Bangarh, Mahasthangarh,

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Chandraketugarh, Tamluk, Atghara, Pandu Rajar Dhibi (as already dealt with distinctly in the first part of our work) pertaining to early Maurya-Sunga-Kushana-Gupta period are immense. Those are found to be interfering the common aspects of the daily life of men and women— shreatching even upto the remotest imagination of myths and spirits. The transparent simplicity, direct and naive executions, delineations of forms and structural manipulations of the specimens, in fact are matters of great aesthetic merit.

With the radicalism occupying the state and the religion as well as the social changes having taken place, we further find tremendous expansion of the terracotta art activity right from the seventh/eighth Century AD when elaborate ornamentation of monasteries or temples and execution of exhorbitent architectural decors started taking place. The trend continued intensely till 11/12th Century AD. The sculptural qualities of the large sized terracotta plaques in panels available from the excavated remains of Paharpur (Dt. Nawgaon), Mahasthangarh (Dt. Bagura), Jagjivanpur (Dt. Maldah) and Maynamati (Dt. Comilla) distinctly signify a major transition to an universe of broader realities in the sphere of creativity representing an unambiguous aesthetic transformation of the institution of Bengal art tradition. This particular phase regenerated huge potentials of life in its innumerable dimensions. Through their true images, thereby opening up the floodgates of human capabilities and achievements. Later, consequent upon the invasion of Islam in early 13th Cent AD. not only through the conquerors but also through the missionaries of religious expansion, there emerged a new political synthesis. The status of an individual was determined by the acceptance of the religion and also by his loyalty to the throne. The conquerors being with deep rooted heritage of the Arab social traditions were guided by political and economic interests of the state and partly by the spirit of Islamic brotherhood as well. Attitude towards the non Muslim subjects depended upon the mentality and outlook of the individual rulers. There was neither any consistency nor any well laid plan or logic and whims worked intermittently. Rulers after all considered that it was their duty to put restrictions on non muslims and to shift a part of feudal ownership to a section of Muslim people, who enjoyed royal patronage.

Despite such qualitative as well as structural changes, feudalism in Bengal maintained the production relations unchanged and also restricted the massive distributional change. The economic and sociological upheavals caused redistributions of ownership though the rural life of Bengal continued to be governed by the orthodox systems with much of internal religious contradiction over and above the abuses of caste bias and apartheid among the Hindu social groups or sects.

Art was elevated to a higher status of aesthetic merit at the later stage of the pre Muslim era— forming a true identity of the cultural heritage of Bengal. It was in the phase of proto mediaeval period as evidenced in the terracotta specimens excavated from Paharpur, Maynamati, Mahasthan and Jagjivanpur. The gains consolidated in the properties of visual art upto this stage was exposed to a catastrophic semblance with the drastic authoritarian decrees of the conquerors in the aspects of blasphemy. There was an apparent silence and the chronology of the history of visual art paused over with no external manifestation of cultivation and practices for a spread of about two centuries.

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The changes in the patterns of landholding, revenue administration, distribution of income, religious lands, criminal laws and in particular, laws applicable to the non Muslims respectively and seperately as the case may be, would also become a major contributory factor for such persistent tranquility.

The tradition over a millenium years in personification, formation and creation of cult images and practice of image worship was intrinsic to the existence of people at all levels. Religion itself was an institution with or without the royal patronage and people at the upper tier of the social hierarchy were the sponsors or promoters of the institutional religion not only for spiritual gains but also for better recognition of their status in social stratification. The construction of temples, monasteries etc was generally funded by rich people. Nevertheless the art and architecture of such edifices were the direct contributions of a section of artisans or craftsmen who lived for passions to life and considered devotion to the work as the highest form of life. This apart we find the common people at the distant rural settlements continuing to cultivate faculties of their own mythology and art which remained unaffected by the dominating political and spiritual institution at any point of time.

The declared religious war against idolators and the acts of iconoclasm by the Muslim invaders struck the formal religious institutions including their achievements in art and architecture based upon creation and formation of age old practices of cult worship. Immediate replacement of the religious and cultural order and acceptibility of a new order to the people was not possible in as much as the invaders could not produce and present higher form of culture and a concrete form of art activity as per Islamic norms, also due to their lack of wisdom and unawareness of the aesthetically relevant facts.

At the initial stage, the change in the attitude of the rulers created catastrophe in the institution of art representative of time and tradition. Nevertheless the faculty of folk art continued to exist within the core of rural settlements in so far as the teeth of invaders were inadequate to put down such devastating potentials underlying the depth and deeper roots, which were inherent to the common tradition of folk.

The Muslim Conqueror's or ruler's interdiction of representative art appeared as a sense of prohibition. At that time, imitation of living forms was regarded as blasphemy. It was believed that the artist brought into being a pseudo creation as it was in mockery of God, who alone gives life. Incidentally in any other religion, art is not a mimicry of natural species. It is not merely a source of pleasurable sensation, but is a manner of speaking about god and nature. It no more trespasses upon god's dignity that when believers speak of him or see of him or taste of him using names and other images. It is permitted to other religious sects or beliefs to make use of the name and form and it is not contrary to truth to make the properties of intelligible things understood according to the simplitude through sensible figures. But the demonstration of iconoclasm demands defiant persons to be as unbelievers who rest to such blasphemy and content of what can be expresed in words. But this sort of ascetism and renunciations should be deemed proper to those who have vision of god without means and have earned right to say that all scripture

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is in vain. Soul's powers expressed in outward works as a means to deifications and enlightenment are otherwise encroached.

Generally the idea of work existing in the practical mind of the artists finds its own scope of expression. The form, idea or semblance of things are also derived through the artist's mind conceived with the spiritual or noble ideas concerning firm conviction to the causes of the religion, are also sometimes induced by the sermons of rulers and priests. The forms and practices of the embellishments were also sometimes governed by the traditions of the soil or imports by the rulers from their origin in varying degrees depending upon the progress in the process of assimilation or otherwise. Islam in Bengal brought forth elements of some unconventinal glossary of ornamental images and architectural practices which ultimately turned out to be the national products taking shape of creative impulse of the artists in course of time.

The diverse aspects of decorative panels, plaques and images introduced altogether a different trend of depiction and execution of non figurative art in Bengal. Some of the representative monuments in the category of distinct decorative edifices of non representative or non figurative terracotta art works may be briefed as under.

Dist Maldah

1. Eklakhi Mausoleum - Hajrat Pandua
2. Adina Mosque - Hajrat Pandua
3. Tantipara Mosque - Gaur.
4. Chamkati Mosque - Gaur.
5. Qadam Rasul Mosque - Gaur.
6. Darasbari Mosque - Gaur.
7. Gunamanta Mosque - Gaur
8. Khaniya Dighi Mosque - Gaur
9. Jhan Jhaniya Mosque - English Bazar. Maldah
10. Dakhil Darwaja - Gaur
11. Firuj Minar - Gaur
12. Lotan Mosque - Gaur

Dt. Birbhum

1. Matichur Mosque - Rajnagar
2. Saugram Mosque - Lavpur.

Dt. Murshidabad

1. Kherur Mosque - Sagardighi
2. Mosque Brahmani - Sagardighi

Dt. Burdwan

1. Nutanhat Mosque - Mangalkot
2. Kulut Mosque - Ketugram
3. Narsinghapur Mosque - Ketugram

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Dt. Dacca

1. Baba Adam Mosque - Rampal
2. Goaldi Mosque - Sonargaon

Dt. Pabna

1. Navagram Mosque - Navagram
2. Shahjadpur Mosque - Shahjadpur

Dt Mymensingh

1. Shah Mohammad's Mosque - Egarsindur.
2. Mosque of Masjidpara - Egarsindur.
3. Gauri Mosque - Egarsindur.
4. Sadi Mosque - Egarsindur.

Dt. Tangail

1. Jami Mosque - Atia

Dt. Rajshahi

1. Bagha Mosque - Rajshahi

Dt Faridpur

1. Aulia Mosque - Faridpur.

As already stated, Islamic influences replaced the representation of human beings and animals by schematic and stylised floral designs. As a matter of practice, niches of Mihrab, in particular that of the central mihrab was profusely decorated. The portals and facades of all the sides at such mosques/mausoleums, the basements, cornices, windows, pillars, jambs, sprandels of the arches, the space of the walls subdivided either vertically or horizontally into a number of frames, the tympanum of the arches, the recesses, the projections, the manaras, towers and even smallest projections were ornamented with variety of repetitive or non repetitive brick works, carved brick designs, elegant terracotta plaques.

The principle propagated by the Muslim rulers in India as regards the ownership of land was 'the first cultivator was the proprietor by virute of his having brought the land into cultivation.' He was however bound to pay tithe and in certain cases 'tribute'. In this respect there was a great similarity between the principles of the new comers and those of the natives. But there was a difference in respect of land acquired by conquest. The principle of the new comer was that the conqueror was the proprietor of the conquered land. He possessed the right either to distribute it among the Muslims or to leave it to the original proprietors levying upon them a capitation tax called the Zezyat and also a tribute upon their land known as khiraj. The tithe or cosher was to be imposed only upon believers. Khiraj was to be levied according to the nature of the land. But the Muslim did not apply these principles to any marked degree in India. The

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existing land system was not affected very much by the change in rulers. Sri J. Mitra in his land laws of Bengal (p-23) observed 'Khiraj was never formally levied although an attempt was made to do so by Emperor Alauddin in the begining of 14th Century AD.

The prinicipal reason as to why the ancient land system of India almost remained intact was that after the fall of Prithwiraj, most of the Hindu pricipalities surrendered to the new comers and they were allowed to retain their respective holdings on their agreeing to pay Khiraj or tribute. Sri J. Mitra further observed. 'It was not until the days of Akbar that any serious effort was made for the collection of the Khiraj direct from the cultivators. Even then, the hereditary chiefs who had long ancestries to tell were not disturbed. They got Sanads which provided for payment of nominal sums as rent . The apathy and the carelessness of the Nawabs brought about a system of non interference with internal management, whether fiscal or judicial, of the various provinces of the empire and the Hindu Rajas or Zaminders took the full advantage of the situation. The Hindu Rajas or Zaminders though theoretically were mere collectors of revenue, yet performed almost all functions of the soverign. They heard and decided cases, civil or criminal and enforced disobedience to their decrees and sentences in the same way as soverigns. They had their own officers or pundits. The police administration was under them. In fiscal matters, their authority was supreme, the interference of the ruling power being really few and far between. The necessary result was the practical continuation of the Hindu system. Although Raja Todarmall, the celebrated finance minister in Akbar's government made attempts to settle directly with the cultivators in Bengal, his scheme was only partially carried out and even those Zamindars who had been ignored were soon restored to power.

Through the political and military authority of the Muslim rulers was uncontested and a minor share of the land was given to soldiers as Jaigirs and aymans, the Hindu Zamindars continued to prevail upon the social and economic life of Bengal at the isolated rural settlements. The contemplated expansion of Islamic brotherhood however did not find a totally conducive situation on the soils of Bengal and the age old hereditary principles and practices based upon a consistent tradition since early historic days, emerged as serious impediment among a section of the subjects— who even in certain situations were able to overcome the temptation, favours, coercion and influence of the missioneries of Islam like Sufi, Darbesh etc. Initial iconclastic zeals of the rulers were gradually mitigated and the rulers were constrained to accept the Hindu civil and revenue administrators in the state machinery.

Since the circumstances existed making it necessary to accept the principles of co existence at the later stage, the Muslim rulers due to their stable footing and unquestionable political authority despite severe internal conflicts for the throne, remained secluded or indifferent towards the social life of the subjets in the vast territory, which was practically under the control of feudal nobilities save and except the ocassional interruptions for the cause of religious statehood. The network of the Islamic fraternity was also at the same time expanded to the downstream through a seperate set of missionaries and assignment or delegation of judicial authority to a section of ardent believers — who from time to time indulged to partisan actions to curb the social prominence

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or dominion of Hindu feudal nobilities. The incessant conflicts or contradictions however did not wither away the religious life of the common people in the need based interdependant ageold characters of social stratification in the rural areas.

During the era of the independent kings of Bengal under Islasmic rule there was absolutely a lack of cohesion and equilibrium in the socio-economic and socio cultural spheres of the state. The institution of state was clearly dominated by the military superiority of the rulers and cultural victory did never turn into a reality due to ontological inferiority of the conqureors and that they themselves could not initiate a logical process of human acceptibility. Anomie prevailed upon the rural life of Bengal in so far as the internal contradictions were self generating and self aggravating due to the attitude of the rulers in the affairs of religion and society. Universality and radicalism of Islam helped fast expansion of the Islamic brotherhood in a caste invested divided society, but the more of the converts were apparently induced by the lavish political as well as economic favours of the state. New sets of contradictions therefore emerged and the society as a whole was exposed to a new political as well as cultural synthesis. At the later stage of the reign of Mahmud Shah dynasty, at about 1475 AD, Shamsuddin Yusuf Shah, and thereafter the short tenure of Sikandar Shah and Jalauddin Fateh Shah also, Bengal continued to be practically lacking any central political authority and the Sultanate became a hotbed of crude conspiracy of the aspirators, who were mostly incompetent persons committed to obscurantism and were disinclined to progress and developoment of the territory under their control. The conspiracy in its own way was further aggravated when the sultanate was taken over by Habsi slaves starting from Sultan Sahajada in 1487 AD. The conspiracies against the throne were initiated around the throne itself and the change of power having assasinated or terminated the supreme personality of Sultan remained a recurrent affair. It was therefore imperative that monarchy turned a seat of murky ambition of contemplators who were primarily the terminators. During the era, we find lack of positive perception not only of the tyrant and iconoclast rulers, but also the totally detrimental atmosphere lacking particularised process of reason and thinking at the grassroot level.

Though the Hindus were holding local feudal ownership under the Muslim suzerainty, they were exposed to sheer humiliation and discrimination in relational issues. The consequential modification in the norms and practices, dogmatic rituals and manifestations, antagonistic traits of caste differentiations, etc, became obvious with the decline in the formal institution. The upper echlon of the community was more in distress with the repeated compromise or adjustments to the whims and fancies of the rulers which were detrimental to their traditional codes, ethics and rituals. A community with strong beliefs of destiny and rebirth surrendered the ethos like defeated subjects giving rise to utter demoralisation of feelings and sentiments. Nevertheless the attributes of the foundation of the spirits of enlightment through assimilation, compelled them to look back to the down to earth realities of the life and living of the long discriminated folk communities—who survived the ravages of time with their own mythologies and rituals so long discarded or rejected by the institutional Brahmanism.

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Yet another sphere of literary mysticism and rhetoric developed in the core of the society which was popularly known as Mangal Kavya dedicated to the supremacy of various folk deities having astounding elaboration and revealation of the situation in the contemporary society. The Manasamangal of Vijay Gupta, which is believed to be composed almost at the contemporary period, as for instance reveals among other narratives, the social position of the Hindu community and the contempt of Quazis on common Hindus in particular the Brahmins. Though such narratives are imaginary, it cannot be denied that the writer had direct experiences of social facts pertaining to oppression of Muslim Qazis and powerful state officials. The position is further endorsed by similar other literary depictions including Chaitanya Bhagabat of Vrindabandas and Chaitanya mangal of Jayananda. The situation of anomie did however stabilise with Alauddin Hussain Shah resuming the throne of Bengal as independent king in 1493. The name of Alauddin Hussain Shah is aquainted with the people of Bengal in general due to his greater tenure of the sultanate, abundant archaeological evidences signifying his tenure and his association with the name of Chaitanyadev. There had been different speculations on the way he captured the throne but the fact that he was able to restore the law and order situation to consolidate his position cannot be denied. During his regime he exhibited his military supremacy having expanded his regime, through annexation of certain areas pertaining to neighbouring territories and arriving at different treaties or settlements with privileged positions. A section of historians maintain the view that Hussain Shah did encourage and patronise the early Bengali literature. Despite his efficiency as ruler and other credibility, his so called generosity as patron of literature is still a matter lacking substantive evidence.

Hussain shah was a devout Muslim and maintained a high regard for the famous iconoclast Darvesh Nur Kutub-i-Alam. He used to pay homage to the Mausoleum of Nur Kutub-i-Alam through circumbulation around, having travelled all the way on foot from Ekdala to Pandua. The so-called liberal and secular administration generally pronounced on a popular parlance also does not seem to have any basis, as one of the reasons supporting the contention of placement of Hindus as high officials, was merely a political necessity which started earlier from the era of Illias Shah dynasty. The continuous struggle for the throne and frequent changes in the empire however once again captured the political scenario after the tenure of Nasiruddin Nusrat Shah— son of Hussain Shah and from time to time, Bengal came under the suzerainty of Delhi empire before finally annexed by Mughals in 1575 AD.

The internal and external crisis of the traditional religion became aggravated at the time when Sri Chaitanya was born. (1485 AD). Being sleepless at the night and singing recitals in devotion to Mangal Chandi as a legendary goddess of secular order and worship of Manasa also as legendary goddess of Serpents were what the masses practiced in the name of the religion. Spineless and cowardice rituals, meaningless ambiguous heretical practices and lack of spiritual devotion with only formal observance of ritual prescriptions were practically the engagements of Brahmans— who were more inclined to pursuits of worldly affairs. No wonder therefore that

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they should be described in the Chaitanya literature as Pasandis (godless or unholy men) who can not tolerate true devotion of God. The scholars explained religious texts but got no inspiration therefrom. Scarcely could any vigorous sign of life be traced in religious pursuits of even the ascetics who had renounced the world ostensibly for divine purposes. In short the atmosphere of Navadwipa— the birth place of Chaitanya and greatest seat of learning in Bengal was, as it were, surcharged with worldiness.

The Bengal Vaishnavas are worshippers mainly of Radha Krishna. According to this school the Radha Krishna cult seems to have originated with Madhabendra Puri Goswami from whom his disciple Iswara Puri Goswami inherited it. He transmitted it to his disciple Sri Chaitanya whose followers developed it into a full grown system with a philosophy and theology of its own. Thus Madhavendra Puri is described as the seed, Iswara Puri as the sprout, Sri Chaitanya as the trunk, Advaita and Nityananda his most prominent lieutenants as the two main branches and their followers as minor Branches, etc. of the great tree of loving devotion.

While orthodox Brahmanism lost its social and political leadership, the collectivitism of norms, codes and ethics lost their relevance with the decline in the regulating spiritual authority. Contemplation for individual salvation through elaborate and rigorous process of worship by a very small fraction of people did never have any impact on the social conditions, which became dismal day by day. The spiritual resurrection which Chaitanya did cause, emanated from his humble approach to the core of the heart— where the inherent desire of love, pleasure and happiness seem to be linked with inner self. Its insatiable nature implies that it aims not at the fleeting love and pleasures of the world, but at eternal love and eternal bliss unlimited in extent, intensity and variety. But unlimited results cannot be expected of limited things. The only thing that can satisfy the cravings of the soul in its true essence is Sri Krishna, the ultimate reality who is bliss and love and infinite in his all respects.

Sri Chaitanya succeeded in inducting universality of rituals irrespective of rank, esteem, caste creed and beliefs and simplified the approach to sense pleasures and spiritual practices for the common masses, which amounted to social recognition of a vast section of people who were deprived, neglected and condemned in the age old caste proliferation. He attached the greatest importance to the chanting of lord's name 'Hari' which alone may take one to the highest goal and it is perhaps for the reason that the scriptures of the Bhakti cult admit no difference between him and his name.

Humility, tolerance, and respectfulness to others are the things necessary for the efficacy of chanting Hari's name. In order that he may attain love for Krishna, a devotee must feel that he is humbler than even a piece of straw, he must be tolerant as a tree that gives shelter, fruits etc even to those who cut it off; and without expecting any return he must respect every person, believing that Krishna lives in him.

With all potentials and possibilities, a formidable movement in the social and cultural arenas appeared which had distinct elements of spontaneity, devotion, sensibility and truthfulness, and which became scarce phenomenas in the social life of Bengal at the relevant time.

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The moral degradation and their ugly manifestation was not conclusive in the inner and outer life of the common masses. The cultural regeneration was made possible through the Chaitanya movement, as it primarily stressed upon human nature to include kindness, benevolence and altruism and that such faculties are eternal. Chaitanyadev caused spiritual regeneration, while remaining fully aware of the complexity of the process. Thoughts and conjectures born of turbulent emotions and as a reaction to events and human behaviour— which may be often inconspicuous and superficial played important part in enormous creative artworks generated during the era, as a link between ideas and feelings— showing the possibility of the assimilation of moral principles and their transformation into an ideal passion. The passion glorified humanity and poetised the kindness and spiritual responsiveness which revolt against spiritually crippling social evil.

The all pervading sources of human creativity were explored by the movement consequent upon which scores of lyrical, mystic and aesthetially rich rhetorics were composed by successive exponents— which created a distinct sphere of identity of the soil as a whole. Highly intellectual in approach, maticulously traditional, and profoundly scholastic assertions in the Vaishnava literature composed by six Vrindaban Goswamins— which formed foundation of the sect and helped the Vaishnava exponents of the time in furthering the cause of the sect were.

(1) Bhaktirasamrita sindhu (2) Ujjavala Nilamani— both by Rupa Goswami with annotations by his nephew and disciple Jiva Goswami (3) Gopala Campu and (4) Sat Sandarbha both by Jīva Goswami (5) Annotations on the tenth Skandha of the Bhagavata by Sanatana Goswami and annotations on the whole of the same work by Jiva. (6) Sri Sri Haribhakti Vilasha by Gopala Bhatta Goswami with comnentaries by Sanatana Goswami (7) Sri Sri Govinda Lilamrita and (8) Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita by Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami.

The spiritual regeneration caused in the process did not confine solely to the particular sect or belief, since the overall impact of the same penetrated deep into the sensitivities and devotions of people as a whole irrespective of the sector of belief or theology. Saktism was all along a very important cult in Bengal and Sakti worshippers who far from being elusive in there devotions, paid their respect to and worship of their tutelary deities. The detailed aspect of the worship of Sakti or divine mother showed ten major manifestation known as Dasa Mahavidya. Tripura (Sorashi), Kali, Tara, Bhubaneswari claim in a descending order the largest number of worshippers. Chhinamasta, Dhumavati and Bagala are principally worshipped in connection with the performance of the six magic rites. The most important name in Bengal as a tantric author is that of Krishnananda Agamvagisha. He is usually supposed to have been contemporary of Sri Chaitanya (AD 1485-1533) although scholars would assign him to a later date. He is believed to have conceived and introduced through divine inspiration, the image of Kali as she is now worshipped in Bengal. His Tantrasara is the most comprehensive and popular of the numerous digest that are known in Bengal. It is regarded as highly authoritative and all tantric worships are performed according to the injunctions contained in it. The book deals with all kinds of tantric rites, such as initiation, process of worship, homa (ceremonial offering to fire) and kulachara contains hymns of various gods and goddesses and describes their yantras (Mystic diagram).

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The gross degeneration in the rank and file due to erosion of values, ethics and the standard of moral disintegrated the social bonds of the contemporary Hindus and crippled the imagination, innovation and progress within the society as a whole. Distortion, perversion and derogatory instinctual practices bent down the spines of the social and spiritual forerunners. The resurrection taking place with the uprising of the Vaishnava mysticism under the leadership of Sri Chaitanya did not only serve the cause of the particular sect, but also became a potent solvent or a catalyst for a section of elites to come down and share or consolidate their feelings and sentiments with the downstream. At this juncture, the process of assimilation as well as acceptance or recognition of the so long discarded sects, paved the society as a whole to a platform of commonness of passions, love and generosity— which became a contributory factor of enormous creativity, aesthetic impulse and effloroscence of mystic sentiments in literature and art. The cultural properties which the society could attain within a short span of time even surpassed many of the traditional achievements and that too irrespective of sects and beliefs.

The Sakta lyrics in Bengal at the relevant stage also exhibited a spirit of escalation enjoying significant popularity among the rank and file. The depth of the devotional fervour is no less than what we find in the Vaishnava songs, though abounding in homely expressions, they did not exhibit the characterstic features of high poetry.

The spirit of devotion is found to permeate the poetic literature of the Saktas though it did not predominate over the religious rites of the sect. As a matter of fact, it would often seem to be in conflict with them. Some of the hymns and songs go so far as openly to denounce these rites. Many of the saints also of whom we presently speak were reputed not for the strict observance of religious rites in all their details, but for their ardent devotions to mother goddess.

A curious phase of the devotional attitude is represented by the apparently sceptic and passionistic tone noticed in some of these songs, which complain of the heartlessness of the divine mother, in that the people at large even those that are firmly devoted to her, often groom under untold sorrows and sufferings. A mock threat is held out that if such a condition is allowed to persist no worship will be offered. It is of the nature of a loving child's complaint to his mother. It is however fully recognised as is clear from so many songs that it is through the exciting trials that the divine mother tests her devotees and leads them to final beautitude.

One more notable point to be recorded in connection with these lyrics is that many of them aim at elucidating in a very popular way the rather intricate teachings of the tantras.

The depth and diversity of the perception during the era either in literary or visual art seemed astonishing. The contemporary writers and artists understood and estimated the tremendous power of generalisation and the dynamic link with historical reality inherent in conceptual formation of the images. Besides the phase of resurrection as idicated hereinbefore as a psychological and social phenomenon there existed correlation between social milieu and artistic generalisation. The *milieu* is perceived as fragmented and images were attached to various groups and starta of society.

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It is obvious that the new creations in art and literature did not eliminate achievements of earlier artists or minimise their active role. Each true artist brought his individual or collective contribution to the treasury of human culture. Social and aesthetic value of works of art and literature did not depend exclusively on their time of appearance or on the particular stage of development of art. Their significance was inseperable from the comprehensiveness of artistic generalisation, which pointed to phenomena and tendencies of unfolding historical reality.

The social life was preoccupied by human passions interspread with the portrayal of intimate spirits and natural inclination to the sphere of images underlying a space for multiform phenomenon of beliefs. The era of transition was marked by overlapping spiritual goodness in interpersonal and social relationships and it was in fact was a bold reflection of the process of liberation of man from the principles and prescriptions of mediaeval society with its derogatory religious and ascetic canons. For the first time in the art and literature of Bengal, the earthly feeling of man, his enormous inner strength and active qualities were expressed with depth and conviction. Simultanously the complex conflicts experienced by man in a new stage of society's development were revealed by new art. This particular phase is also represented by victory of earthly and sensual over the ascetic morality and hypocrisy, of the real over the irrational, of intellectual freedom over the deadly scholasticism. Confrontation between human feelings and dogma ended up inevitably in the triumph of natural inclination.

The trends of the artistic avantgarde were significantly influenced by social aspects of life This found its striking expression in the objectively significant results of the work—which appeared not only in social themes but also depicted inner world of the creator. The art in fact based on a satisfaction of common unified needs of the people and embodiment of certain ideas.

Neverthless the common folk came out from the state of isolation as discriminated subjects who embraced a new attitude to social reality and formation of new and truly human norms of behaviour and communication between people.

The basic qualities and signs of art with some minor changes were transmitted from the individual surface to social surface and the canonised genere, stereotypically based on a satisfaction of common unified needs as well as embodiment of spiritual ideas ullimately failed to unify the aesthetic needs of the common people. The on going process of universalisation and depiction of life in its own forms nullified the derogatory caste stratification—when such stereotype social bonds in the contemporary mode of production failed to characterise the true reality and to signify its objects and processes. The strong artistic impression was produced through attraction of the people by illusion as well as by real life happenings. Over a period of about one and a half century, the intensive life and active social functions of the common masses across the surface, generated a variety of spiritual strivings, emotional constructs and irrefutable truths— which became catalysts in structure of aesthetic transformation to a new era of creativity and in the growing tendency of time, a genuine process of revival and revitalisation of literary and visual art in a given social milieu of the 16th and 17th Century AD and a massive expansion

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of art and architecture in Bengal took place in a dynamic isolation from contemporary political hierarchy.

While the factors and situation warranting such isolation have already been elaborated hereinafter, we observe that consequent upon theological assertions of Bengal Vaishnavism under the influence of six Vrindavana Goswamins, spiritual subjectivity again canonized art and articulated the norms and rituals relevant to the art almost in the same manner Brahmanism maneuvered it on the early occasions. An extenuated form of dogmatism in a different retrospection interrupted immediately the inherent sensuality of the rank and file who in fact supported the spiritual institution with their passions and endless submissions. The later developments generating a more radical atmosphere were the results of socio economic and socio political changes taken place in the internal as well as external hierarchical structures of the society in the semi feudal semi colonial statehood in the declining days of Islamic rule and early British days of Bengal.

The traditional economic stratification of the rural Bengal did not reflect structural or fundamental changes in the past despite consecutive external invasions, internal mysteries and unusual overlays. However during the early British days the position was destabilized exposing the feudal relations to a new set of complexities surrogating a nexus of transfer of feudal ownership to a new set of rootless proprietors in the process of permanent settlement of 1793.

The Englishmen began their history in India with their first blow directed to land system which brought wide repercussions on our entire economic, political and social structure. They assumed that the governement was the owner of all the properties and secondly they transferred to the Zaminders their supposed proprietory rights, as if the cultivators were no body and had therefore no right on the land. Their position was relegated to that of mere tenants at will under the Zaminders.

The considerations can broadly be divided into two classes— political and economic. The most important political consideration was the creation of a class of vested interest among the natives of the country which would act as the bulwork of British empire in India. Of the economic considerations, the necessity of an adequate provision for financial needs of the East India Company was of supreme importance. The fixing for ever of the land tax payable by the Zaminders to the Government was expected to yield a stable and measurable income to the later which was then sorely needed in order to meet the huge expenditure of great military and civil establishments of the company and to pay dividend to its proprietors.

The redistribution generated catastrophic effects on the socio economic equilibrium of the self contained rural units of Bengal in as much as the new sets of urban dwelling proprietors were parasitic money launderers as British accomplice and were grossly recalcitrant towards the traditional spiritual web in the rural life of Bengal. It is worthmentioning that the patronization of art through construction of temples or religious edifices which were so far undertaken by the village Zaminders or traditional merchants having deep root in the village, was avoided or neglected by the new set of proprietors who were devoid of any strong social or communal commitment.

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As a natural corolary to such developments, the interpersonal or occupational obligations or social bonds were weakened and the rural life of Bengal was tormented by the agonies, which changed the cultural atmosphere to a great extent. The canonical obligations for technical and decorative aspects of religious edifices thereafter were less governed by the new sets of proprietors who had neither any regard nor any inclination for maintaining the sanctity of the norms and ethics rooted in the soil.

Since in the meantime there had been a process of acculturation going on in the remote souls of masses which is evident in the gradual access of the folk properties in the collecative ideas and perceptions, commonly accepted by the spiritual institutions, the sudden distributional change caused erosion of the cononical obligations in execution of art and artefacts. The folk transliteration of the myths, legends and epics however occupied the space arising out of the subordination of the institutions by the British Royalty in the process of implementation of the regulation of permanent settlement.

As the practice of art as a whole irrespective of the faculties of literature, performing or visual arts etc, was sourced from a singular inspiration or motivation of the urge of normal spiritual devotion and objective passions, the space as well as surface turned as a focus for all creative pursuits of the masses. The folk transliteration of all the sects of beliefs including Vaishnavism, Saktaism, Saivism, Buddhism, Jainism etc, also pervaded the practical aspects of the temple decoration, architecture etc, like any other discipline of art including literature, ballads, songs and dramas etc.

The historical developments in the principles of artistic creativity keeping pace with the inner sources of mythological narratives, embraced functional interactions betwen literature and art. Same sets of poetics, language, ideological analysis, trends and specificities of rhetorics, balance and proportions were found generalised in different disciplenes and folk transliteration depicted in all posibilities, the commonness of imagination assimilation of components, qualities and characters.

The scholastic discipline and the aesthetic height which the earlier temples belonging to 17th and early 18th century could achieve were however decayed in the absence of the acumen of social guardianship of the new proprietors of land under permanent settlement regulations. The edifices belonging to the later period recorded evidence of gradual penetration of subjects external to the canonised peripherals which would have summarily discarded in the atmosphere of erstwhile social bonds. This acculturation was directed towards regression of the aesthetic status, but dominated by the spirit of folk transliteration of divinities and frequent subjects of daily life as well as bare realities of life.

Apart from Vaishnava and Sakta cults as central themes, translated into versions of down to earth spiritualites, there had been effloroscence of a new kind of literature deriving materials usually from non institutional sources and popular tales. This popular genre which originally emerged in the twelfth or thirteenth century found its massive expansion in the eighteenth century came to be known as Mangal Kavya or Panchali. The earliest of such extant poem is Krithivasa's 'Sri Rama Panchali' (fifteenth century). The other narrative poems of this type are 'Sri Krishna

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Vijaya' (1480) of Maldhara Basu, Manasa Vijaya of Vipradasa (1495) and Manasa Mangala of Vijaya Gupta. One outstanding poem of on the Manasa legend written sometimes in the middle of 17th century is Ketakadasa's Manasa-Mangal. The Chandi mangala poems were written more carefully than the average Manasa Mangala ones and therefore the former was not as prolific as the later. By far the best writer of Chandimangala (Mid sixteenth cent) poetry and undoubtedly the best and the most representative poet in Middle Bengali is Mukundarama Chakraborty 'Kavikankana', whose Chandimangala presents a gallery of good pictures of the domestic, social, economic and cultural life of the day. The oldest extant Dharma Mangala poem is by Ruparama Chakraborty. It can be assigned to 1649. In the eighteenth century some half a dozen distinguished writers wrote Dharma Mangala poems. Of them best known are by Ghanarama Chakraborty and Manikarama Gangopadhyay written in 1711 and 1781 respectively. Another most famous literary work of the Panchali type is the Mahabharata poem, 'Pandava Vijaya' (Seventeenth Century) ascribed to Kashiram Dasa.

Mention may be made of some mushroom Mangala poems of insignificant literary merit potraying lesser local deities of folklore origin. A typical writer of this category is Krishnarama Dasa whose first work Kalikamangala, really a version of the story of Vidya and Sundara was written in 1676. This was followed by other Mangala poems such as Sasthi Mangala (1679), Raya Mangala (686), Sitala Mangala and Lakshmi Mangala.

Mangala poetry was continued to be written also during eighteenth century and reached its climax at the hand of Bharatchandra Rai Gunakara. He completed his magnum opus, Annada Mangala in 1753. Another outstanding poem written in the Mangala style in Rameswar Bhattacharjee's Siva Sankritana or Sivayana (1710) delineating the domestic life of Siva and Gauri.

A general sense of pluralism within the social organisation of mediaeval Bengal was evident in so far as there had been multiplicity of beliefs in groups or guilds. which shared ideas and perceptions in keeping with their respective level of consciousness. There had been no contradictions among the multiplicity of competing elites and the multiculturism in the spheres of literature and art was more complimentary or contributory than being distinictive or rudimentary. The reciprocity between various cultural traits and beliefs generated a positive social identity of the persons undertaking construction of temple as a sacred task— forming part of spiritual contemplation of the self. Despite the temples being dedicated to any particular deity, the builders allowed access of other sects of belifs in the ornamentation of the edifices as strategy for social conformity seeking to change the dimension, value and focus of conflicts into socialization. Practice of routine worship. performance of rituals, utilisation as a platform for social mixing through organisation of festivals or fairs specifically focussing upon any holy day or season, functioning as a centre of gravity for maintenance of internal norms, systems and procedures and reciprocity between various individuals or groups etc.— were evidently the justifications for donors who resorted to such activity fostering behavioural consistency of the people around them irrespective of individual emotions and sentiments. The significance, motivation, conceptualisation and sanctification of ideology in its profound form of creativity have been discussed hereinafter to highlight the

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practicabilities or possibilities and limitation of the enriched cultural treasury once created by our predecessors.

Of all the springs of action that moves the masses, religion is the most potent. The social activities which are calculated to influence the life and conduct of a whole mass of people in India ought to have a spiritual background. And because in Bengal, the masses were reached through various festivities and entertainments prescribed in religious texts and characterised by religious fervour, the concentrated wisdom of ages which could easily permeate through the various starta of the society from highest to the lowest. The factors contributing to creation of a vast treasure of temple decoration. which were considered integral part of the spiritual obligations, sometimes as means a diffusion of socio-religious culture, may be summerised as under.

(a) To popularise the virtues inculcated in the great epics. mythologies and puranas among the common masses.

(b) To narrate the stories from the wide field of mythologies to make the lessons attractive and visually interpreted with ornamentations so as to make difficult ideas intelligible to the people of very ordinary intelligence.

(c) The interests of the religion were promoted and religious fervour was kept alive among the people through teachings about salvation of souls in simplest form inculcating beliefs like 'wages of sin is death' 'truth is to be taught', 'light is to be sought' and 'love is to be cultivated', which people were exhorted to follow.

(d) The eternal varities which have found expression in our philosophical and religious literature are held in undiminshed reverence in the popular mind through the efforts of teachers, preachers, arists and sculptors.

(e) Supplying elements of congregational worship and enlightened mass consciousness through emotional rapport.

(f) Visual pleasure as well as spiritual edification was the primary gain of the people derived from the representations of profuse and elaborate art works on the terracotta panels of the temples, which were intended for producing various social aspects of religious enthusiasm.

(g) The temples, besides private worship of the deities by the concerned family, were also allowed to be utilised by the collective causes like adoption of vows, periodical or seasonal gatherings or presentation of various performing arts for celebrating the exploits of the deities and also to offer special worship on important occassions.

(h) Consequent upon the changes in the political superstructures, the social integration became a bare necessity in terms of which the traditional art and literature of the unlettered masses did grow and develop in the fold of spiritual institution and was also integrated into it. The orally transmitted tradition and also partially visually transmitted images, were translated or buttressed into ornamental imagery of conceived characters, on the elaborate artworks of the late mediaeval temples of Bengal. The artworks therefore became a solvent for social integration and performed an important social function at the relevant era of transition.

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Caste in India emerged as a form of social stratification involving a system of hierarchically ranked, closed endogmous starta. The membership of the starta is ascribed and between which contact is restricted and mobility is impossible. Although it apparently reflects economic inequalities typically followed or permitted to members, caste stratification is ultimatelly rooted to ranking in accordance with the degree of ritual purity ascribed to members and to their activities. It is further claimed by some people that the caste divisions are underpinned by racial antipathies, supported perhaps by legal sanction. Neverthless the political and social subordination, occupational specialisation and ethnic antipathies involved ritual and taboo barriers which the Brahmans perfected on various divisions, caste groups and an outcast group the untouchables who performed only the most degrading occupational tasks thereby becoming ritually impure.

The powerful priesthood of Brahmans which was capable of elaborating the taboos into a consistent body of ritual regulations, which could be enforced in alliance with the ritual purity derived from the life style and occupation permitted to the members and monopolised by the higher castes. Everyday social practices were determined for individual castes and sub castes and regulations were designed for maintaining ritual exclusiveness of the Brahmans by restricting or prohibiting marriage, commensality and social and physical contact across caste bounderies. They ritually regulate the occupations and the techniques associated with them which members were allowed to follow. These regulations were supported by temporal as well as spiritual sanctions derived from the powers of the caste authorities, public opinion and Hindu theodicy.

Nevertheless there had been a social integration which occured as unintended consequences of economic relation or structures of power and also a system integration arose from the interrelation of the groups and collectiveness and the operation of the institutions, processes which tend to occur behind the backs of the individuals involved.

The switch over or shifting of the political as well as spiritual authority to the Muslims in the proto mediaeval period in Bengal, emanated regressive impact on the social substratum in the absence of the atmosphere of reciprocity. The gradual erosion of the authority of the erstwhile spiritual leaders became imminent as the nexus with the rulers for execution of established social regulations became totally absent.

The inevitable changes in the military as well as political superstructure caused umemployment of several hundreds of soldiers of the erstwhile Hindu empire. The soldiers were mostly hailing from class and tribes in the bottom of the social pyramid who left behind their hereditary vocations earlier in the interest of their employment in army. Neverthless, their reverting back to the villages or communes caused an internal disequilibrium particularly at a phase of utter frustration, distress and subordination prevailing upon the social space at the isolated village settlements.

The imminent social relations were shaped by the conquest of Muslims, nevertheless the spiritual leadership of the vast unconverted Hindu comnunity though became fade continued to remain with the erstwhile hierarchy. In view of the the changed scenario, the activation of internal regulatory mechanism of the Hindu community became a dire necessity— as the crisis of the landslide of conversion became formidable and disruptive to the basic tenets of the social bond. In order to ensure a wider acceptability of the antecedent condition of the social organisation

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the elements of greater logic having taken lenient view of the caste stratification and apartheid were inculcated in the contemporary regulations, thereby easing out the relational issues in the shared platform of the defeated subjects. The factual locus standi of the internal social bond exposed to degeneration caused necessary deregulations, which became imperative. The relevant issues therefore may be summed up or indicated as under :

(a) Restoration of the dignity of manual labour in the social stratification and creating an atmosphere of due recognition of the essential services rendered by the down to earth castes or tribes.

(b) Projecting the indispensibility of such people as productive forces and also inculcating a sense of belonging among them.

(c) The religious myths and legends were reoriented and restructured to incorporate and assert the proposition that the communities engaged in mannal labour are blessed subjects of the god— and they are privileged with the god's favours, dispensing with the erstwhile degenerated feeling— emanated out of their birth in low caste families.

(d) The Hindu theodicy was associated with a belief in reincarnation. It was believed that indivdual's caste position was held to be either a reward or punishment for their fidelity or lack of it, in observing rules of the castes of their previous incarnations. Since caste rank was congenital and fixed during any one incarnation, the only hope of upward mobility laid in individual's securing a higher rebirth through the faithful discharge of caste obligations.

The preaching of the belief that the low caste tribes are subjects of god provided a powerful incentive for adherence of the restructured norms and practices, which opened up avenues for emergence of creative faculties of the common folk.

(e) The remigrated soldiers who were earlier deviated from their ancestral professions, were frantically in search of the new means of livelihood. Economic redistribution within the rural settlements became inevitable as there had been enough alurements for conversion against material gains. In view of the drastic changes in the communal perceptions as indicated hereinbefore, the unity as well as solidarity in the community was ensured— thereby paving the way of return to the ancestral professions by the said remigrated soldiers. The change in the common attitude with wider acceptability was further multiplied by the devastating influences of the Vaishnava movement of Chaitanya cult, sowing seeds for the furtherance of creative faculties as reflected in enormous art and literary works in the contemporary period.

(f) The consolidation of the different fragments of the society however did not materialise to such an extent as it may give rise to nationhood with distinct identity. However there had been a diffusion of acceptability in the souls of the masses so as to visualise a transparent relationship into the causes of worldly affairs.

(g) The revenue administration in course of time turned punitive, in so far as the conqueror rulers at the early stage were primarily concerned with material and instinctual comforts with no roots on the soil of Bengal. Even after being annexed to the throne of Delhi, Bengal as a province or Subhah become a victim of colonialsation against a price of huge transfer of wealth

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on frequent ocassions without any civil attention for development or welfare. Apart from normal taxes being levied by the state, various other tariffs like 'Nazrana', 'Mokari', 'Gar Mathut', 'Mathut Pilkhana', 'Fauzdari Abwab' etc. were superimposed and were administered through Zaminders who were sometimes unable to shift the burden on the subjects and turned defaulters as well as victims of the same oppression of the conquerors.

Deprivation, poverty, famine and man made disasters became destiny of the people as a whole— who were coerced also by the strong presence of the foreign traders or mercenaries through deceits or conceits of muscle. During such period, no development of mind of the people in fact was possible, nevertheless the spiritual overlapping through the message of Vaishnava mysticism and radicalism manouveed the souls of the creative masses— who exhibited enormous creative efforts within an austre affordability of patrons emerging thereby as agents for social and cultural resurrection.

We find an elaborate potrayal of the said social realities in the terracotta decoration of the temples, which embodied a parasytic gentry, vulgar and despotic class of feudal owners and this has positively reflected strong humanistic approach of the aesthetically induced artists.

(h) Bengal emerged as a centre for collection of slaves by the unscrupulous and unfair foreign mercenaries in the guise of trade— which vastly affected the social life of Bengal. People in debt trap and agonised by poverty and distress became innocent victims of traders including Portugese, Dutch, Armenian, Danes, French, English and German slave traders.

The slave traders made clandestine deals and were basically rouges or hooligans who acted in a grossly derogatory manner unbecoming of a civilized society. There had been absolute lack of state administration, which became further aggravated with the incessant raids of the 'Bargis' — a band of Armed 'Maratha' dacoits in the 18th century. The raiders plundered wealth, caused rampage of the shelters of the people and made indiscriminate atrocities on women, children as the indifferent rulers were unable to redress the situation and the victims fell prey even after supporting them with their valuable taxes.

Common masses therefore did have no option left but to surrender themselves to the destiny and bonded to the irrational norms and practices for magical beliefs against unpredictable eventualities. Social anomalies and erosion of a common accepted standard of ethics however affected the morality of the artists. who exerted intense passion in execution of such themes of slave trading and naval vessels carrying the staggered slaves meant for export, etc. in the temple terracotta at different temples thereby signifying deep social commitments.

The construction of brick temples or edifices and certain drastic modifications in the architectural norms from time to time were induced by social or spiritual acceptability of the hereditary artisans mostly belonging to the Sutradhara community. Archaeological evidences available from some excavated ancient sites amply endorse the intense architectural activity primarily in bricks and the medium became very popular in Bengal since prehistoric days. There had been a few massive architectural monuments in bricks. but the majority of the monumants are small and exquisite dispensing with the nature of stupendous institutional complex of the

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community worship. The basic contributory factor appears to be financial, as Bengal was never construed to be very economically affluent supported by a storehouse of resources of strongly established monarchy. But the intensity of the architectural activities involving the grassroot masses in late mediaeval Bengal, due to the spiritual regeneration as mentioned hereinbefore in the pockets of the rural units supported by the economically advanced classes belonging to a variety of castes or varnas appears to be encouraging, not only in the the social perspective but also in the best judgement of aesthetically rich and valuable executions of the works of art that took place at the relevant time.

Yet another striking feature is evident in profuse terracotta ornamentation of the temples in typical forms and motifs testifying creative resources of the artists who searched for avenues to express their cognized sensitivities in the cheapest natural medium, without exploring eternities in their esteemed creations. Such creations were not meant for exclusive personal god or community gods' meant for a specific sector of belief, but spread over the mythologies and mysticism relating to all cults and sects in strict avoidance of the elements of purported dogmatism, notwithstanding the exclusive elaboration of myths around the particular god or goddess to whom the temples ware dedicated. Moreover the artists preferred to interfere and document all the different spheres of social life— the qualities and dynamics reflected in their consciousness about the real life and living around them. These features of their passion, feeling as well as belief and the environment are generalised and conveyed with the help of the most convenient and accessible art medium. The heterogeneity of the motifs does not eliminate the unity of thinking, rather confirms a real process for natural and social development.

In an effort to elaborate the structural as well as aesthetic elements of the vast treasury of art in the temple decorations of the late medieaval Bengal, necessary reference to spot verification as well as valuable works done by distinguished scholars have been made in the following chapters. It is worth mentioning that depending upon such information base, some logical conclusions have also been derived which may become issues of controversy due to limitations of the author himself in the sphere of observation or unawareness. Such ocassions may be treated as merely circumstantial and be condoned by the esteemed readers.

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CHAPTER—II

THE SOCIAL SPACE

The mobility of social organisation vis-a-vis the development and decline of art

There is a strong tendency among the art-related activists from the premise that art should be contextualised in terms of place and time in a general sense and more specifically of institutional structure, norms, practices and patronage or other supports. Like other phenomenon, it is also believed that art can not be fully understood divorced from its social context and because whatever else it is, an art work has economic value and that the value attached to it derives not solely from aesthetic qualities intrinsic to the work but from external conditions as well. In such a situation, any evaluation of art in the historical perspective need to be contextualised in terms of social constructions informed by the different phases of integration and stratification taken place in the time space, which now is being dealt with.

The mediaeval social space of Bengal is primarily signified by the strong prevalence of social bonds as a means to socialisation in the semi feudal— semi colonial socio economic characterisation. The social bonds evident in stratification of castes, clans, communities, economic tiers are testified by numerous epigraphical and literary evidences and artistic depictions available to us. The process of transition was very slow and the core of the rural masses maintained surprising isolation from earthly realities of war, ravages, political and economic disasters, famine and other calamities in the critical junctures of history retaining however certain strong beliefs including those of destiny and rebirth. Nevertheless such behavioural isolation was never the indicators of active minds of such core population who exhibited their high aesthetic impulse in enormous and uniterrupted practices of art and craft. The creative masses in keeping with their intrinsic age old traditions, had least contemplation for social mobility but caused devastating momentum of the celebrated art practices at the conductive space created by the dispensation of the barriers of isolation by the genesis of the Bhakti movement in the sixteenth and seventeenth century A.D. in Bengal.

At the outset of the discussion on mediaeval social space, it is imperative to note that the basic structures of the self sustaining village communes seemed to have been established and the productive forces marked off from each other. The commune cultivators with their artisan dependants generated the wealth that sustained society and they did not control its disposition. They were observers of the struggle that raged over their heads between imperial dynasties and local power holders as each sought to increase its hold over the grain and men of country side.

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The raid of Md. Bakhtiar Khilji in early 13th century and his victory over Lakshman Sen did not only provide a space for Muslim rule in Bengal but also foisted upon its soil a process of migration of adventurers and mercenaries from the North western India. This slowly caused emergence of a distinct dominant elite class, as the Muslims gradually consolidated their authorities. The erstwhile Hindu ruling class having lost their political status either continued to remain as insignificant subjects or their descendants helped the adventurers to bring under control vast tract of the land of Bengal. The dominance of the Muslims has endured in varied shapes for more than five centuries on the soils of Bengal either on sovereign status or on the status of Governor under the imperial rule of Delhi.

The initial days of the Muslim rule in Bengal are coincided by incessant strifes contesting supremacy in pitched battle with the indigenous rulers– which subsequently turned out to be a down out process of infiltration and subversion by small bands of invaders. Despite having military supremacy and bearing the message of the vast expanding religion of Islam, the Muslim rulers themselves fought each other for gaining power by guilte instead of military process. The practices of infidelity, mistrust or deceit for political supremacy was much prevalent which contributed to economic and political destablisation, or uncertainty till such time it came in the fold of Mughal rule at Delhi.

There had been a process of subjugation which owed much to the support of an ambitious section of local people either newly conveted or holding some official position at the centre of power. Some Muslim or Hindu local land owners were rewarded for restoring order in certain areas showing rise of insurgent activities by allowing themselves control of land they subdued. The local feudal lords who had shown unquestionable allegiance to the invaders on throne by simply asserting authority over any particular sect of indigenous population overreacting the tacit approval of the imperial government and committing random massacre or atrocities on men, women and children were duly awarded or placed in enhanced positions. Soon afterwards many of them did assume the title of Raja which was never borne by such families before.

Even with the common masses subdued, however the early privileged settlers had to contend with neighbouring clans and the new bands of invaders seeking land and power. Sometime the early colonists were able to push aside or subordinate latecomers. Many of such local powers were unseated from their position of dominance and some families prospered at the expense of their predecessors until they had made themselves the prominent land owners of the area. Such upheavals did not necessarily involve armed battle between clans. This sort of things sometimes happened for unwise defiance of the emperor by such local powers or fall precipitated by corruption or lack of ethics or becoming victims of devastating natural calamities resulting to crush of economy.

Muslims came as settlers as well as conquerors from the earliest days of their rule onwards. They commonly settled in garrison towns and then moved out into the rural areas as they received grants of land from Muslim rulers. The missionaries or propagators of the belief of Islam, who were sent by the rulers to the interior rural areas for expansion of spiritual or political base,

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were sometimes amply rewarded for their achievements through grants of lands. The other factors played much in revenue free grant of lands are whims, fancies or gestures from the Muslim rulers for some reasons or the other with the inherent motive of securing wider acceptability among the masses.

A section of such Muslim population in the later years turned imperial service to good advantages. It is however evident that despite such favours of land grants being available to the Muslims as a community, after centuries of Muslim rule the area of land under their disposal rarely amounted to one quarter of land in any district. The conquests on either side could never extinguish the defeated from the soil. The victors desired only to control the disposition of the produce, the former inhabitants were left in possession of the lands, but reduced in wealth and importance. Hence in these districts or areas subject to repeated invasions, members of different clans usually lived intermingled but stratified vertically, with the most recent group of conquerors at the top and the oldest hardly distinguishable from the cultivators. Fragmentation of a few settlements was not quite uncommon and the struggle of dominance, continuing rent disputes etc. sometime led to even sub proprietory revenue settlements on the crossroads. The settlement pattern took a different shape where one section continued to retain its dominant position undisturbed for long. In certain areas the old settlers formed such a stable or kin groupings that their land holdings and to some extent the lineage population as well were sharply demarcated from the other. While this kinship ties did not ensure harmonious social order, they did often mute conflict without however affecting their territorial base.

The organisation of the rural society and the structural changes

The rural organisation was headed by lineage chiefs who belonged generally to higher caste surrounded by their immediate kinsmen and dependants and sometimes also by the militia whose job it was to overawe the surrounding villagers. The upper ranks of the militia were usually horsemen drawn from the members of the lineage, while the foot troopers were low caste retainers supplemented on the occasion of fights with the neighbouring clans or government troops, by local villagers impressed into service. In addition to its role as clans center, the lineage head quarters often took on "RURBAN" character (in terms of Richard G. Fox) in which agriculture pursuits were supplemented by craft production, the holding of market and ceremonial and religious observances. The lesser member of the lineage, cadet families, and distant relatives however lived dispersed in the countryside among the ordinary artisans and cultivating castes in wholly agriculture villages.

These settled upper caste lineage were known collectively as Zamindars or Land holders who effectively controlled as quasi proprietors of the land under their sway. The Zamindars occasionally cultivated some land directly with hired labour. The remainder was distributed to resident cultivators who normally possessed an inalienable and hereditary right of occupancy in their family plots. The Zamindars regulated the settlement of new comers in the village, distributed land for cultivation and took return a share of the produce. The share was normally a certain percent of the land revenue assessed on the peasant's land, was either collected by the Zamindars as

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a separate impost on the cultivators or awarded to them as a remission from the total revenue paid to the state. Ordinarily too, the Zamindar was appointed Revenue Payer, for the lands comprising his zamindari. By itself this position bought the holder little material benefit. He had the difficult task of negotiating with the headman of each village to collect the revenue, and he had then to deposit the state share with the authorities. In return he got only a service allowance. Yet the post was highly covetted for it gave the Zamindars enhanced power and so enabled them to encroach the shares of others. In addition to their share of land revenue, Zamindars were entitled to certain petty perquisites including taxes on trade and forest products as well as customary presents from their cultivators as the time of marriage, death, and the like.

Although saleable, Zamindari rights normally descended by hereditary successions with the same family and were partitioned amongst heirs accordings to the principle of equal division among brothers. As a result after several generations an individual Zamindar might possess no more than a fractional part of a village.

Occasionally the creation of yet another tier of so called intermediary Zamindars in the early Muslim state for ensuring greater collection of land revenue from the entire clan territory was encouraged for subordination of lowest administrative units of zamindaris. The acknowledged leaders or the chieftains with their control over militia were held reponsible as well for law and order in the territories and through such alignment they got perquisites in cash (commission) or kind (land) and got their powers enhanced at the expense of those beneath them. The objective was to strip these lesser holders of their zamindari rights, and so to reduce them to the status, if not of ordinary cultivators, then of privileged tenants with little say in the management of their villages. The process of dispossession was pursued with even greater vigor in case of the estates with discriminated identity of castes or clans or religious dogmas.

The acute contradiction between primary and intermediary Zamindars became very material in so far as the contest was never one sided. Anxious to increase his revenue and his hold over the countryside, a strong ruler would not tolerate the defiance of the overmighty subjects, who withheld the state's dues as they squeezed those beneath them. The beneficiaries in British as in Mughal times, when the powerful beaurocratic state was established, were the village zamindars entrusted with the collections of the revenue from the village lands either as a group or through a headman.

Out of interplay between state and clan there frequently emerged the figure of hereditary Raja, who provided a solid base enabling the value and culture of Hindu society survive in the face of overwhelming Muslim presence. At no point of time, the Rajas were wholly independent. Above him always stood the imperial Muslim Government. Sometime the Government helped intending or even sitting Rajas to consolidate their power when it appointed them to collect its revenue or subdue rebellious tracts. But if it lent the Raja its authority, it extracted in return a recognition of its supremacy. Although the balance of power between Hindu Raja and Muslim Government fluctuated over time, we observe that both of them remained bound in a single political system.

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In the eighteenth century the authority of Bengali rulers extended beyond the delta plains or the area inhabited by people who speak Bengali language. The province of Bihar stretching along the Ganges to the west, was joined to Bengal intermittently from 1697 and permanently after 1733. To the south west, the province of Orissa was also annexed to Bengal, although most of it was to be lost during the course of the century. By 1707 the enlarged Bengal was begining to emerge as an autonomus political entity. It had been incorporated as a 'Subah' or province of the Mughal empire in the 16th century. Like other Mughal Subahs, Bengal was ruled on behalf of the emperor by twin Governors who divided the functions of Government between them. The Subahdar was reponsible for the maintenance of law and order, the command of the armed forces and the administration of criminal justice. The 'Diwan' controlled the finance and taxation and administration of criminal justice. By about 1717, the two offices were combined by Murshid Kuli Khan, an extremely able administrator, who had already been Diwan for several years. When he obtained the office of Subahdar, Murshid Kuli Khan had come to the regarded as the first Nawab of Bengal, that is the first unchallenged ruler. By the time of his death in 1727, Bengal had virtually become a self contained estate although this was not apparently Murshid Kuli Khan's conscious purpose. Tribute was still paid to the emperor, but effective imperial intervention in Bengal ceased and the Nawabs recognised no political obligation outside their provinces. The Nawabs were eventually to lose Bengal not to the emperor or to any Indian rival, but to a group of Europian Merchants.

The inhabitants of Calcutta— Indian or European lived under a rudimentary system of Government derived from the East India Company's purchase in 1698 of what are known as Zamindari rights. This system was not significantly modified when British became the conquerors of Bengal. There was certainly no attempt to introduce any element of representation for the Europeans. Like other Bengal zamindars, the Company collected revenue, administered justice and tried to maintain law and order. The revenue came from the ground rent and from a mass of tolls and market dues which were usually framed out.

At any time before 1784, British was a miniscule element in Bengal's vast population. They lived in tiny enclaves in the great cities and commercial centres of Mughal Bengal, such as Murshidabad, Dacca, Kashimbazar and Patna.

The socio-economic as well as law and order situation in Bengal during 18th century was stable compared to the extent of upheavals that took place in Western or South eastern India. There had been not much threat of outside invasion under the Nawabs at least till 1740s and no serious insurgency in fact took place within. It was only after a brief episode of war in the middle of the century that the Indian regime was replaced by an European one and the British met an insignificant opposition within the province. After 1764 the British could consolidate their position and they devised institutions to replace gradually the durable institutions of Mughal Bengal.

Murshid Kuli Khan, the architect of a self contained Bengal kept control of the province unitl his death in 1727. The Europeans considered the era of Shuja-ud-Din-his successor who reigned up to 1739 as an era of good order and good government. Shuja-ud-Din's son replacing his father

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was overthrown in an upheaval by a provincial governor Alivardi Khan in 1740. The reign of Alivardi Khan between 1740 and 1756 was full of serious turmoils despite his untiring efforts to enforce the administration. The devastating raid of the Maratha 'Bargis' at the west of the Ganges started from 1742 took away enormous wealth and lives of men, women and children indiscriminately. The frequent raid only came to an end with the loss of most of Orissa to the Marathas in 1751. Shiraj-ud-Daullah's attack on Calcutta in 1756 was the starting period of the war which brought the British to gain control of Bengal in 1757 and the process ended in 1764 with the expulsion of Mir Kashim and his allies from Bihar. Thereafter the East India Company could consolidate their position of military strengths to combat any further invasion or insurgency.

Irrespective of the status of the Central Government, the comparative stable condition of the province during a major part of 18th century owed much more to the Bengal Zamindars— who were grass root level Governors maintaining local administration. Primarily they were appointed officials acting as agents of the Nawab in some respect, but in the others they were to be treated as independent proprietors of the large estate. Even though they were primarily reponsible for collecting the Government's revenue from the produces of the cultivators, they sometimes performed many other functions including maintenance of law and order as well as running of the administrative machinery. The Larger Zamindars such as Burdwan, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Nadia, or Bishnupur covered huge areas over which Zamindars maintained their own troops and levied tolls on trade. Before 1784 the British had nither the resources nor the knowledge to impose more than a skeleton administration of Bengal, so the role of Zamindars remained an extremely important one.

The economic life of Bengal was greatly influenced by the role of Zamindars— who were relatively favourable compared to their counterparts elsewhere in India. They did neither use their power to enlarge their domains by waging war on their neighbours, nor levied taxes on the cultivators at rates which provoked fight and rebellion or themselves incited revolts, as observed elsewhere in the Mughal empire frequently. We do not also find any event of widespread depopulation or rural revolt during such period consequent upon atrocities committed the by such Zamindars— who could also ensure smooth movement of goods and persons along the river system and roads of Bengal in comparative security.

The Muslim rulers in Bengal while encouraging the contemporaneous conversion to Islam the influential social elites, also through awarding some honours to Hindu zamindars or Rajas gave a symbolic sanction of the authority. Muslim emperors or Sultans sought consistently to prevent the rise of such men who may turn against the state with the same power he had been using on its behalf to control the countryside. The centre of Muslim power in the district of Maldah, Dinajpur and later on in Murshidabad, Dacca, Bikrampore, Satgaon, which were either royal capitals or within the striking distance from the royal capitals, formed part of markets or local gentry. The vast tract of resourceful lands in the district of Rajshahi, Jessore, Chittagoang, Bagura, Comilla, Nadia, Burdwan, Midnapore, Birbhum, etc, were continued to be dominated by hereditary Hindu feudal lords or chieftains. Neverthless for consolidation of authority in their own hands

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at the centers of power, the potential Rajas were defeated, compact lineages were broken up and all driven back to the soil. The different territorial heads were never allowed to be unified, nor they were allowed to invoke additional claims on further territories. At the early stage of settlement however the Muslim authority were isolated in a Hindu sea— which position took a very long time of several centuries to turn back. Even by the end of the Muslim era, there was as many hereditary Hindu Rajas or elite land lords as can be seen only a few in the cases of Muslim.

The power of Muslim state, however was by no means fixed or unchanging when the governement was in the hands of a weak monarch or succession, central control could slacken even over the provincial governors giving rise to the withholding of revenue due to central treasury and opening resurgence of local power elites, who spread their hegemony on the land occupied by them. Neverthless the trend did not last long and such sovereignty were more or less temporary or subject to compromise under coercion by the central government.

As a common phenomenon however, we observe that the Muslim conquest bought lasting changes to the organisation of rural society in Bengal. Very small bodies of men mostly occupying or contemplating to occupy political power under the support of the new set of rulers had spread across the plains a new elite comprised largely of the proliferating lineage of the early settlers, including as well upstart indigenous people who had successfully adopted to such a way of life together with scattered tribal or militant clans. As Zamindars, these men controlled the bulk of the land and they had not been by any means were belonging to any homogenous group. Divided on the ground the Zamindars were commonly stratified internally as well. The ordinary village dwelling Zamindars had to share the disasters-natural and man made famines, draughts and all other eventualities including imperial atrocities, along with the common cultivators and artisans residing at the village and as the centre of all economic as well as social functions, they were accountable to the common people. Besides unquestionable loyalty to the feudal hierarchy superimposed upon them, while the layering of the authority including rights over land to the beneath i.e. the village Zamindars was felt necessary by the Sultan/Nawabs of the Muslim state for eradicating the probable competitors for power or maintaining orders as well as smooth collection of revenue, the village Zamindars had to struggle hard against double edged threat from both the poles. After all the Zamindars could inculcate among the common villagers a feeling of coherence and a sense of common destiny. The political order as described by Burton Stein in his 'The Segmentary State in South Indian History' (in Richard G. Fox, edition, Realm and Region in traditional India, Delhi 1977-pp-3-51 esp. pp. 9-11 and 43-45) is found cognizable while assessing similar such situation in Mediaeval Bengal, as a "Segmentary State" in which power was decentralised and structured pyramidally with the lesser unit duplicating on a smaller scale all the functions of the greater, and the centre giving a coherence to the whole by its exercise of a predominantly ritual sovereignty. In the Muslim empires, however the central authority seems always to have been able to enforce substantially greater transfer of resources to itself. The state had grown so strong with order flowing from the imperial capital and revenue to it– that the political

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system more nearly approximated the hierarchical or bureaucratic model. Yet the Mughal rarely tried to deal directly with the cultivating Raiyats over the heads of the local lineages. Nor did even the coming of the British with their intrusive bureaucracy, at once put an end to the power of these entrenched land holding elites.

The observations by Thomas R Metcalf in Land, landlords and the British Raj (University of California— Berkley 1979– pp. 116) in the context appears to be relevant—"The triangular encounter between State, Raja and Zamindars remained, from Mughal times on to the twentieth century, the central theme of much of the rural history of the Gangetic plain."

The appointment of Governors in the provinces (Subah) by the Mughal emperor was made under different consideration including rewards for leading wars won by the emperor, combating insurgency pockets, adroit manipulation of factional rivalries, rendering service for expansion of Islamic political base, showing inconolastic zeal to put down the religious base of the other religions, imperial service ensuring substantial increase in Government revenue or by way of promotion in the imperial service for remarkable contribution to the throne etc.

The Mughal Subah comprised of a number of Sarkars (districts) purely as a matter of administrative convenience. Apart from geographical contiguity, the main channels of riverline trade were also was taken into consideration for marking off the Sarkars to ensure better way of administration of justice and revenue. The Bengali dialect gave the common people the astounding sensuality in tongue and literature, nevertheless the royal courts continued to use Arabic or Persian as official language— making out thereby an isolation of the administration from the people— which was supplemented by interpreters or translators in the administrative hierarchy.

As a Mughal province, Bengal was administrated according to the standardised procedures of the empire. Its governors, members of imperial corps of Mansabdars, were strictly supervised by the centre and were shifted at frequent intervals. Their exploits as individuals left no mark in local tradition. The transformation of the province into an independent state, albeit one still acknowledging the titular supremacy of the emperor, dramatically altered its character. Above all the existence of a hereditary ruling family with a court and a capital gave the province a coherence and a sense of common destiny. It was no longer an arbitrary collection of districts, united only by their participation in a large whole, but a centre of political power and a focus of cultural aspiration. Where such sovereignty emerged, the collapse of Mughal central authority did not at once lead to anarchy. Power was instead dispersed from the imperial to the local level and these concentrated afresh. The ruler could enforce the law within his own domain— which Aurangjeb's weak successors could not— over a far flung empire.

Available references do not provide adequate indications signifying geographical or economic division of the territory of Bengal done by any ruler for administrative convenience or revenue administration before Sher Shah. Giasuddin Tughlaq however subdivided the kingdom of Bengal in several provinces to each of which he nominated a district Governor.

Todarmull's rent roll however signify existence of five divisions and twenty four sub divisions— from Sylhet in the east (on river Surama) to Purnea in the west (on river Kausiki) and Kakjol

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(on river Ganges). It is evident that the areas of Midnapore, Hizli, Chittagong and Coochbihar were not included in the province. Midnapore and Hizli were in Orissa, Chittagong was with the Arakan and Coochbihar was an independent state. The territories were however annexed to Bengal during the regime of Mughal emperors— Shah Jahan and Aurangjeb. Hooghly having come in possession of the Mughal was established as the royal port of Bengal. All the public offices were withdrawn from Satgaon (Sapta Gram)— which soon declined into a mean village.

The type of Mughal administration signified hereinbefore designated Fouzder as the chief police officer and judge of all crime— not capital; Kotwal as the Head constable of the town was subordinate to him. The Nazim as supreme Magistrate presided at the trial of capital offenders.

In 1658 Sultan Sujah however prepared a fresh rent roll. Instead of nineteen Sarkars shown by Todarmull, he had shown thirtyfour Sarkars and in stead of 682 Mahals he had shown 1350 Mahals. However the division did not last for long since each and every ruler had the prime motive of ensuring substantial increase in revenue at all times— by whatever arrangements did suit them, for the time being, notwithstanding the economic condition of the common people of rural Bengal.

The coming of the British as conqueror after Clive's momentous encounter at Plassey in 1757 and the later developments in regard to veiled predominance secured by them did not however cause drastic switchover of the political as well as financial administration of the state as already discussed. In 1763, outraged at the independent behaviour of their puppet Nawab Mir Qasim, the ambitious servants of East India Company in Calcutta drove him from office. Mir Qasim then sought refuge with Shuja-ud-daulla— the Nawab of Oudh— with whose help and that of the Mughal emperor Shah Alam, he challenged the British at Buxar in Bihar. The battle of Buxar on October 23, 1764 bought a new military power that of Great Britain at a bound in the heart of Northern India also.

The British at that time openly acknowledged their predominant position in Bengal and Bihar by accepting from the emperor the Diwani (Revenue administrator) of the province. The British East India Company in the mean time made several deceitful or evasive agreements and treaties showing as if they had no desire to extend the frontier excepting charging of war indemnity and revenue contracts at a predetermined rate against extension of military support to the Nawab if needed for defence of the frontiers etc. In fact, installation of a puppet at the helm of affairs foisting upon him a huge financial butden, encroachment of the sphere of functioning, gaining special privilege of duty free trading, at all counts maintaining it as a buffer state, kept up for the purpose of British Indian foreign policy— inextricably trapped in a relationship that was soon to sap its strength and self confidence. This was a stop gap arrangement considering the inadequacy of British manpower, military strength as well as wealth to tackle the extremely complicated economic and political administration of the people on an unknown soil and to wait for consolidation of its position. Gradually repeated and continued interference in the system of judicial, political as well as economic administration by the servants of East India Company gained ground making the Nawab nearly bankrupt and his Government demoralised. Thereafter the British made decisive intervention turning the Nawab to a passive instrument of British supremacy

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at the cost of half of his revenue and all his independence. In the process, several changes in the internal organisation of the society took place through disruption of the balance between the Nawabs and Zamindars or Rajas, which so far enforced or caused enforcement of a social stability. The settled pattern of life accustomed with the Nawabs made it difficult to sacrifice half of its revenue and they were in severe financial strains to maintain elaborate luxury, splendid magnificience of the court, the lavish patronage to unproductive disciplines, and the construction of imposing monuments etc. In a desperate bid to supplement the treasury deficits, the Nawabs drove the vehicle of atrocities for extortion of additional resources making the common rural folks levelled with the village Zamindars who were all the victims of the circumstances. The rash challenges thrown the local Tahsildars and the reported trials at the "kachcheri" (court) for litigations on rent etc, made the situation more vulnerable.

The agglomeration of the villages in the face of continued Government harssment including dispossessing the Zamindars, were called 'Taluqas' (literally dependence upon or connection with someone as revenue payer) and their holders were known as 'Taluqdars'. The new term denoted a new style of landlordship based more upon the amassing or revenue collecting rights over individual villagers. However at the later stage it became the predominant pattern of land holding.

Emergence of a new revenue administration for ensuring efficiency was evident under the Nawabi the rule through segmentation or split up of certain bottom level units like Sarkar's as per Mughal practice. The Sarkars were broken into smaller units called "Chaklas" roughly equivalent in size to the British Indian districts, and were placed under the charge of "Chakladars", who were responsible for the collection of revenue and maintenance of law and order. The "Chakladars" were then incorporated in smaller number of "Nizamats". The Nazim like an English Divisional Commissioner exercised a general supervision over the Government and deployed the military force, which often included Artillery and English officered sepoys, posted in his jurisdiction. Beneath the new adminstration units were the old paraganas. These kept up unchanged, remained under the charge of Tahsildars, who together with the 'Quanungo' levied the actual assessment on the villages and collected the revenue from them.

Since however the experiments could not derive expected results for long and to some extent momentous innovations, the same no doubt were also intended to get better results. The Izara (contract) system of revenue collection also came in vogue. The post of Nazims and Chakladars were let at auction or awarded directly to individuals, who in return for the appointment, agreed to pay a fixed sum for certain term of years into the Nawab's treasury. The contractors bore the expenses for collection, and appointed the collecting staff. Any amount collected beyond the stipulated sum went into the contractors pocket. The system was convenient and economic, but the same soon became an instrument for extortion as the contractors themselves set out to amass personal fortunes at the cost of the misery of the tax payers. While no such system was free from abuse, the Huzur Tahsil system was also reportedly implemented under it. The village chief or Zamindars as proprietory body was entrusted to collect the revenue and remit the same directly to imperial treasury, and for such works they were freed by all interference from the district

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authority. However the process also proved to be cumbersome and the Zamindars were found to be of lacking probity, adequate worth and integrity.

Yet another system 'Amani' or trust for revenue management was also adopted in certain places for sometime— involving appointment of Nazims or Chakladars to a district without binding him to pay over any fixed amount. He was instead to remit whatever sum he could collect. The revenue demands were settled annually on each village in negotiation between the Chakladars, the Paraganas staff and the village Zamindars.

The 'Amani Chakladar' was a figure akin to their own district collector- the British remained ardent partisans of the Amani system. They kept careful track of the district under the form of revenue management and continually urged to extend it more widely.

The permanent settlement promulgated by lord Cornwallis in 1793 by way of awarding the propreitory title over the lands did not by any means usher in the village communities a golden age of prosperity. Even though the burden of supporting of Talukdar had been lifted from them and the officers responsible for the new settlement ceaselessly proclaimed its fairness, the condition of the village bodies did not at once markedly improve. Indeed the widespread over assessment of the new settlement and the inexperience of the officers in revenue management, when combined with commercial depression and the failure of monsoon on several occasions bought about considerable past due in revenue default on the part of the Zamindars, thereby driving the rural elites into the trap of debt. At the same time, the settlement brought with it a new and more precise definition of all landed rights. The result was a dramatic and altogether unforeseen rise in the enforced transfer of property through the agency of the civil courts. The beneficiaries of the new settlement were to be its victim as well. The effects of such enforced sale upon the organisation of the rural society of Bengal were disastrous.

At the outset, there had been conflicting options left to the British officials in regard to putting on auction for sale as a remedy for recovery of arrear debts against the defaulting proprietors. Was it best in the interest of settled rural order to keep in possession traditional village holders and hence to avoid sale? Or, was it desirable in the interest of agrarian improvement to get rid of refractory and deeply indebted proprietory bodies?

Despite the settlement of zamindari families who were hereditary owners of land turned chronic defaulter or exposing themselves to virtual collapse, rush for execution of decrees placing the properties for auction sale caused massive qualitative changes in the social stratification or the traditional social bonds of the individuals in rural Bengal. Majority of the settled Zamindars were residents of the village and abode by the well recognised principle of joint responsibility in all village communities. This was the very bond which had held all the members of village communities together for so many years in so extraordinary a manner. As such, the extinction of settled Zamindars struck the community as a whole as an offshoot of frustration, demotivation or disincentive for any enterprise or social production. The rural Zamindars were centers of gravity where all forces of negative or positive traits had to touch for proliferation of the commonness in existence at the village communes. In fact, it is not deniable that may such

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Zamindars had wasteful habits and bad character, but the effect of the devastating debt trap made the good, humanitarian, respectable, or radicals as quick victims before discriminating against the notorious permanent settlers, as sometimes proclaimed by the British.

In fact the agrarian improvement-a declared objective for the permanent settlement in 1793 A.D. turned futile, in so far as the new comers purchasing the properties auctioned were non residents of the village having no root in the village communities. All such bidders were parasitic urban elements making a quick fortune through despotic or unscruplous alliances of trade with the British community. They had neither any sentiment nor any feeling for the village community as a whole— who did never had such new comers on their side on any eventuality or during bad days. The financial administration was entirely bestowed upon a new set of officials— who had different perception or priorities as a whole.

The non-resident proprietors continued to neglect their holdings and took no interest in cultivation. Such persons themselves were hindrances to the agricultural prosperity of their own properties and of course were politically impotent in the countryside as well. They used to consider the Zamindari settlements as a source for extortion or making fortunes at the cost of the poor and illiterate cultivating population. As urban dwellers they had much more inclination for urban culture and had the priority of psycophancy to keep the British administration satisfied. They did neither have any social position earned of their own nor had any obligation to society or social cause.

The historical epoch reflects the growing complexity of the contradictions between the contemporary art and social life. The artistic notions presenting social realities moved in the process of transformation according to the regulative semantic orientation and internal co-relations and contradiction in linear and hierarchical stratification of society and culture. The disintegration of socio political hierarchy, the incessant strife foisted upon the economic and political rights of the masses, the degeneration of material as well as spirituals judgements of the new sets of beneficiaries and the emergent changes in the perception of the various sectors of people and changes in the social equilibrium— all these phenomenon evident in the transitory phases had direct impact on the practices of the art— which is testified by the images and concept of pertaining to such historical phases. The distinctive character of the Islamic artistic realism of non-figurative floral motifs had been reflecting the principles and prescriptions of mediaeval society of Bengal and were exposed to colonial cultural synthesis. Nevertheless the social and the aesthetic value representing time of its appearance was inseparable from the intellectual and natural drives of the people— who possessed active qualities but suffered due to lack of depth and dimension in the process of discernable obscurantism adopted by the conqueror rulers.

It is worthwhile mentioning that the broad and multiform phenomenon of the Bengali art and culture did only enter into a conduit of low profile avoiding confrontation with the new sets of dogmas. The complex conflicts experienced by men in the new stage of society's development could not materialize total conviction of the men to the new sphere of spirituality— as demanded by the political institutions. The formated intellectual life of the people did not ensure survival

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of original principles on matters or moral, materials and obligations. The realistic generalisation of the phenomenon became possible only as long as they emerged in the real life. Yet such generalisation was inseparable from the inherent artistic quest and individuality of the artists. The position was further stagnated due to survival of serf ownership and autocratic monarchy— which gave rise to ongoing social conflicts.

The artists or craftsman induced by the radicalism under the spiritual sovereignty of Chaitanyadeb confronted the political reality of the then dogmatic conceptual limitations. However the triumph of human relationship in such a transitory social phase caused substantial changes in the social structure and took important steps in the direction of mastering the social and normal world. The messages of universal empathy of the new wave articulated human qualities and generated responsiveness to the culture even when the inhuman condition of existence prevailed within an unacceptable moribund space and time.

The promotion of external trade through European adventurers and the administrative weakness of the rulers in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century A.D. brought about lasting changes in the patterns of feudal ownership and other attributes of the feudal mode of production. The new colonial disharmonies evident in the contemporary society and the dismal condition of the people helped the artists or craftsmen in shaping their vision on a scale far more sweeping than the earlier.

Due to the total loss of the economic and political sovereignty in the 18th cent AD in the hands of the British, there had been a corrupting influence of the environment, besides the humiliation and depersonalisation as well as the troubles and misfortunes already existing in view of the unscrupulous trade practices including slave trading, atrocities and deceit committed by the foreign traders and sheer callousness of the contemporary political and judicial administration.

The rapid changes of social events and circumstnaces interrupted the natural life of the people in its confrontation with the false and unjust reality. The influence of the wealth acquired, salvaged or coerced through new alliances or new relationship on people and between people, egoistic individualism and social injustice etc, caused extenuation in the essential lines of the development of art practices. Synthesis or superficial realism of the copy book europian style gradually invaded the culminated space of late mediaeval Bengal art in varying degrees in the hands of new sets of privileged social elites arising out of the permanent settlement regulations and/or other sets of beneficiaries in the process of colonial commercialisation by the rulers. The impact of such degeneration in the sphere of art was gradual decay in the potentials of aesthetic generalisation, distortions in the core of traditional percepts and final erosion in the face of all out cultural subordination invoked by the British rulers for establishing their all pervading powers in every sphere of life.

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CHAPTER—III

PROFILE OF ARCHITECUTURE

The late mediaeval brick temples of Bengal are objects of distinct attraction and their novelties have been areas of serious review, scrutiny and research in the recent times by a group of scholars both Western and Eastern.

In the context of the enormous and innumerable instances of these tiny or medium architectural edifices spread over a vast territory in the linguistic dominion of Bengal, in particular the 'Rarh' regions and the eastern part of Bengal, it can be observed that such temples played active roles on the life and living of the people of Bengal. The patrons or donors did acquire distinct social status or dignity in contemplation of upward intragenerational or inter generational social mobility through construction of such temples, which though becoming a home of individual or family worship continued to exist as commumity platforms of the people in the command area. These were places of passions or sentiments rather than the places of spiritual or political authority. The builders or the architects used to posess exclusive devotion to the aesthetic considerations which were construed somewhere beyond the mere utilities in the normal flow of life and were more spiritual than material in the individual perception... Several inscriptive plaques at a large number of such temples provide epigraphic evidences fixing the dates of construction as well as identity of the donors or patrons and the builders or architects. The researchers of more than half a century looked at the chronological order and stylistic analysis of the late medieval temples of Bengal and their decorative or sculptural programmes, motifs and elaborations. The emergence of the Bengali stylistic vocabulary though developed a distinguishing identity in aesthetic standards, did also reflect significant changes in chronological sequence in accordance with such similar trends and tendencies of the other parts of the Indian subcontinent. The process of formation, assimilation, transition and culmination emphasised continuity and changes in the regional connotations from time to time. Considering the exhaustive list of hundreds of miniature shrines in all the districts spread over a period of more than two hundred fifty years it is very difficult to foucs on individual architectural features and sculptural as well as decorative components of each temple. While it is in fact that the temple architecture of Bengal inherited the inherent characterstics of its own soil including those emanted out of its natural and environmental peculiarities, it also absorbed divergent elements from different sources withstanding emergence and development of sub regional schools within its own geographical limitations. It therefore came

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within a broad common framework as a denominator of a traditional architectural activities of the Indian subcontinent.

While the writer maintains profound respect to the commendable works on the various aspects of Indian Architecture by Mr. A P Ferguson ("History of Indian & eastern Architecture"—1876), Mr. Percy Brown ("Indian Architecture— Buddhist & Hindu period" 1924), Stela Kramrisch ("The Hindu Temples"—1946), Sri S K Saraswati ("The Architecture of Bengal"—1976), Sri David J McCutchion ("Late Medieval Temples of Bengal"—1972) and many other distinguished scholars as well as local enthusiasists, it can be said that a very clear scenario has since been emerged making the discipline accessible to common viewer like the author.

The works of David J McCutchion contain an extremely meticulous survey and provide extensive data and information as well as systematic and aesthetic aspects of the hundreds of temples in the linguistic dominion of Bengal including the present Bangladesh. In the background of the recorded datas and informations and also through the exhaustive tours undertaken by the author during the last twenty years, it is imperative that there is at best the scope for mentioning the observations based thereupon in as much as it is difficult to make meaningful contributions over the existing scholastic studies already made by eminent scholars in the field.

It need not be reiterated that apart from merely being a common denominator of the Indian architecture, a characteristically evident Bengali language or form emerged out of the creative hereditary practices of art by the clans or groups of artisans having settlements in different locations which is also evident from the inscription details available on different temples. Nevertheless a cultural generalisation and epiphenomenon appear to have persisted in the corroborative literary and other performing faculties of art which had communicative and contributory effects in formation of the motifs of the contemporary art and architecture.

To be in the backtrack, the materials pertaining to the sequence of the such traditions since the ancient days are in scarce. The standing structures and ruined vestiges brought to the light through excavations in the past provide some broad ideas of such activity carried on in the pre Muslim era.

While the scope of the present work pertains to the late medieval architectural activity, it is imperative to come to the profile through the route of our traditions underlying the ancient pre medieval and proto medieval monuments of Bengal and to record a brief background to facilitate our discussions on the subject.

The Perspective of Indian Architecture

As per Indian notions, the sanctum of a temple is microcosm and the whole temple is the universe inhabited by Gods, demi Gods, human beings and animals, which are represented through figurative motifs on the temple facades. Building a temple is considered as a pious act which not only construed as sacrifice or offering but also as an act of salvation of the patrons or donors and their relations. The devotees who visit the temple are also not mere spectators but they do

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also perceive and worship the God for fulfilment of desires or contemplations. The circumspections and imageries reflected on ambience walls and the total form of the temple are meditated to support the attainment of these desires and contemplations. In brief, the temple is a monument of soul's manifestation and all the constituents of the temple plan and elevation partake in it.

The sanctum of a temple is considered the house of embryo and the superstructure overall provides a broad base which leads to a single point converging all the lines. The devotee develops a feeling of spiritual attainment and is emotionally charged setting his mind and soul in the direction of the enshrined divinity with the presence of an atmosphere created through carving of images in or around the walls, pillars, architraves and ceilings. The high point of the finial is generally at the apex of the center of the sanctum and is the final, conspicuous symbol of the supreme principle enshrined in the sanctum.

The temples being considered as objects of veneration, circumbulation (pradaskhina), adoration and worship (puja) had varied growth in different parts of the subcontinent. This was according to the local needs and credal requirement and subject of course to the interplay or exchange of thoughts and ideas. The ideas or elements underlying such construction of temples in India were derived from mythological sources and they assumed different patterns and styles during their diffusion over wide areas from cradle centres of deities and rituals. Necessarily different forms of temple were adapted to commensurate with the beliefs and their glorification providing some sort of exceptions in the existing order of styles and layout. Both the dominating religions while retaining the inherited principles and techniques of construction did exhibit credal distinctions by adopting or implementing certain innovative ideas in keeping with the cognitive features of the respective creeds in the general make up and content of the structure.

The institutional religions of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism maintained their own identities in the common masses with their own vitality after being maneuvered in successive waves, merging into the traditional, tribal as well as local culture, social patterns, cult beliefs, etc in different parts of India. The tradition of rock cut architecture primarily in the form of Chaityas and Viharas was soon taken up in the trap rock regions of India in the interest of the greater survival of the fabric of construction. The structural temples were also emerged, evidences of which have been excavated in abundant in various sites in northern and southern India and which have been believed to construct since the Maurya Period. The expression of forms of architecture and sculpture through the permanent medium of stone adopted earlier by the Buddhists, then by the Hindus and Jains has enabled the monuments to last for centuries which give us a fairly a good idea of what the contemporary religious architecture and sculpture in general was. The brick built stupas and chaityas which are in essence temples in some places are also found to be constructed through adoption of stone for their protective casing and sculptured vineer. Neverthless the original construction was still in brick only. The stone temples built up in close succession and extended uninterruptedly in Indian subcontinent, were either rock cut out cave temples or carving out rock cut monolithic temple forms and ultimately building them on stones. The temples constructed through lime plastered panels of brick work alternating with the pillars of wood was in fact a convenient method being adopted in different places and situations simultaneously

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with the culture of stone. Temples with distinctive characteristics are obiquitous throughout northern and southern India. As a natural consequence of the distribution of style over such extensive territories, regional variations came into being. While the fundamentals or essentials of temple architecuture bear close affinity with each other, the regional style maintained an uninterrupted flow, which developed local peculiarity, idioms in accordance with the faculty of creativity of the artists conditioned by their inherent art traditions and political as well as cultural traits. The effects of regionalism started manifesting since 7th century AD and were turned to be representative between 9th century and 10th century AD. It reached its apex during 11th century AD and the same was often said to be identified through the dynasties ruling at the relevant time and place.

As a common denominator, the Hindu, Buddhist or Jain temples came into being under the royal patronage of the great empires-which in the south were Chalukyas, the Pallavas and the Pandyas along with the lesser kingdoms wedged in between and in the north the Guptas, the Pratiharas, the Kalchuris, the Kachchhapa Ghata and the Chandellas, etc alongwith Solankis in Gujarat and also other large kingdoms within or outside the mainstream. The spirit at the later stage was soon caught up by the nobility, the mercantile corporation and the agricultural trade and artisian guilds that flourished during those times. Consequent upon the same, chain of temples started appearing in the urban as well as rural areas and such temples were documented through expressive and detailed inscriptions. At one point of time, temples became the hub of the rural or urban life in all its aspects— religious, cultural, social, economic and educational and this became respiratory of all that was best in fabric, architecture, sculpture and other arts.

Irrespective of variations in elevations and certain arrangements of architectural members, the temple structure based on the rhythm of proportionate correlated measurements in both the northern and southern schools, we may sum up certain common basic ingredients as per observations of the eminent scholars in the field.

a i. The northern type of temple is characterized by 'Prasada' with their curvilinear superstructure, the crowning 'Amlaka' and 'Mandapa' with rising tiered roofs.

ii. The sanctum has usually one door in front and false doors in the form of niches on the central projections of the remaining three sides.

iii. At the begining the temple as a whole consisted of sanctum and a square or rectangular pillared porch both covered by flat roof

iv. A covered ambulatory was subsequently added round the sanctum and the pillared porch was gradually enlarged to assume the form of a hall often perceived by an entrance porch

v. The presence of the ambulatory however did not constitute an integral part of any temple in so far as shrines without ambulatory were also set up simultaneously.

vi. Later a vestibule was added between the sanctum and the hall which also tended to develop lateral transepts for ventilation. In the same process the ambulatory of the sanctum also developed a rear as well as two lateral transcepts.

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vii. While the sanctum exhibited one or more offsets on each side, the central offset becoming extremely distinct was generally ornamented with a sculptured niche. These offsets were extended vertically along the facade between the base and the top of the superstructure and added considerably to the views of the elevations.

b. i. Tired Vimana shrines characterize the southern type of temple. The term 'Vimana' represents the shrine itself from Upana to Stupi (base to finial), the whole shrine consisting of Adhisthana (basement), Pada (pillar) or Bhitti (walls), Prastara (entablature), Griva (neck or clerestory), Sikhara (head or roof) and stupi (finial) in the case of simple Vimanas (ektala), with storeys (talas) the lowermost Prastara below and the Griva, Sikhara and Stupi above in storeyed Vimanas.

ii. The Vimanas may be major or minor, nevertheless the same had mandapa adjuncts, which are axial and peripheral. A simple Maha Mandapa was added in front of the Ardha Mandapa and was well integrated with the main parts; the whole often surrounded by an enclosure wall— the Prakara.

iii. The Mandapa adjumets which are open or closed pillared astylar halls are ordinarily flat roofed.

iv. The temples are generally coupled with towering 'Gopura' entrances or 'Dwarasobha' or 'Mahadvara' according to their stature or magnitude, are storied structure over the entrance or entrances through the enclosing wall to the premises of a temple.

v. The Vimana has often a small vestibule in front called the Ardha Mandapa or Antarala standing on the same basement or Adhistana.

vi. Often the additional Mandapa was an unattached auxilliary structure standing separately in the fore court inside the Prakara.

vii. The stature of the main Vimana with its adjuncts the Ardha or Mukta mandapas was increased by the addition of a platform, the Upapitha, below the Adhisthana.

viii. The Gods or Goddesses other than the principal form enshrined in the main sanctum had to be accommodated in two dimensional niches or devakoshthas, on the Vimana and Ardha and Maha Mandapa walls and the talas or storeys of the superstructure. The rest of the figure sculpture was accommodated even on the pillars of the Mandapa. These took the form of auxiliary Mandapas on the axial line and subsidiary shrines or Vimanas, Mandapas (halls), and Malikas or cloisters, surroundings the Central Unit. The whole was enclosed by one or more Prakaras. These additions are sometimes coexisted with the main unit.

ix. It is imperative that the entire temple complex might not be planned and designed at the same time and not executed almost simultaneously. Very often it is the result or gradual additions during various periods thus successively enlarging the original layout and resulting in larger temple complexes.

There had been wide differentiation and classification of temples into categories in so far as any three dimensional construction had its own nomenclature and aesthetic as well as structural

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merits in keeping with various circumstantial factors. Basically the plan and elevation are two different aspects on which any judgement of merit or any sort of evaluation would lie upon. With the increased importance and multiplication of festivals several distribution or redistribution or architectural members both axial and peripheral were made to the nucleus of the architectural plan or elevation thereby getting each one identified with certain peculiarities as well as characteristics. The four sided square or oblong plans and the curvilinear circular and apsidal plans became familiar even in Buddhist and non-Buddhist temples. But the hexagonal or octagonal plan that is found introduced in the make up of shrines would be rather unccommon.

In the matter or rise of simple ektala Vimana or Prasada, it is evident that the same consists essentially of six vertical components, which from base to apex would be.

a. The Adhisthana or basement.
b. The Pada or pillar or the Bhitti or wall, as the structure stands on either or both of these supports enclosing the section
c. The Prastara or architrave with the prominent cornice or Kupota
d. The Griva or clerestory over the sanctum terrace or entablature
e. The Sikhara or ultimate roof covering the top of the clerestory or Griva
f. The stupi or finial crowning the top of the Sikhara

According to the plan, the southern Vimanas are classified as Nagara, Dravida and Vesara as per texts of art.

i. Nagara— sanctums which are four sided, square or oblong from the base to the finial or has a four sided Griva or Sikhara.
ii. Dravida— that which is hexagonal or octagonal from the base to the final or has a hexagonal or octagonal Griva or Sikhara
iii. Vesara— that one which is circular, ellipsoidal or apsidal from base to top or has such a plan in its Griva or Sikhara.

While such categories cannot be said to be strictly compartmental, it is evident that certain mixed variety also emerged having utilized some elements or components of each other in executing of the plan for construction of temples. Moreover there had not been much scope for expression or creation of the styles or images in structural forms within the scope of the established social or religious norms and there is bound to be repetitions or artificiality in such process. It is thus more than the shape of basal parts or body, it is the nature of Sikhara that really matters on the issues concerning classification.

There is not much of difference in the context of the primary architectural members or the basic ingredients of the temple architecture between the northern and southern schools or anywhere else in the Indian subcontinent. This is in view of the fact that the process of assimilation or acculturation among the territorial segments through cultural, social, mercantile or political relationship was in fact a reality which could not be dispensed with despite existence of very strong local tradition. External influence also made its way to the soil in the process of economic social or political interaction. Neverthless the local idioms emerged in the process of transition,

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artistic experiments of the genius and the potentials of creativity of the architects or artists maintained their own distinction of the style or form of the elevation or roof structure.

The broad classification of the southern temples and their forms are as under.

a. The square, circular, hexagonal, or octagonal structures which has a Sikhara that is domical and ends up in a single finial or Stupi (Kuta Vimana or Kuta Sikhara)

b. The oblong and eipsodial body structures with a
   i. Wagon top or
   ii. Valut like or
   iii. Inverted boat like roof or
   iv. Sikhara with a row of stupies on top along the ridge are known as a sala Vimana, Kostha or Sabha forms

c. The Chapa or apsidal structure which has an apsidal roof and a series of finial along the horizontal part is generally called the Hastiprishtha or Gajapristha.

d. The Hara— it is a string of miniature shrines over each terrace (tala) of the storeyed Vimans consisting of Kuta, Kosthas or Salas and Panjaras, inter connected by cloister lengths or balustrades stimulating cloisters
   i. Anarpita Hara— the scheme of a ring of miniature shrine motifs round the central body of each storey would be after a similar layout plan at ground level of a central shrine surrounded by subsidiary or parivara shrines and would denote that it is schematically carried up at every storey level.
   ii. Arpita Hara— the string of miniature shrines on the edge of each Vimana tala that is the appliquè to the body (harmya) of the upper tala or storey without intervening space (opposite of Anarpita) and rendering the same becoming merely schematic or non-functional.

e. The quadrature in case of four sided, polygonal, and circular or apsidal structures could be broken by the offset projections or bays at the corners and along the sides with intervening recesses. The projected bays are denoted as Ratha projections in the northern style temples and are described as tri ratha, pancha ratha, sapta ratha etc. The nomenclature of the bays in the south is called 'Bhadras' which are cantoned by pilasters at their outer corners.

f. On the inner angles of the bays and over the entablature consisting of muldings over walls and pillars they carry members of the Hara— Kuta, Sala and Panjara—as the case may be. The corner ones euqal sided and square carry the Kutas of the Haras, which invariably occupy the corners and are aptly called Karna Kutas. The bays on each face of the Vimana coming between the corner ones are wider, when they carry the Salas of the Hara over their entablature. In between these two the third type of projections would be the narrowest since they carry the Panjara or Nida element of the Hara over their entablature.

The most common unitary type of the temple in its simplest form consisted merely of the sanctum proper enclosing the Garbhagriha with a porch like Antarala or Ardhamandapa. With

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the growth of the Agama and rituals, elaboration set in. Mandapa such as the Maha mandapa, Mukha mandapa, Agra mandapa etc, were added axially and soon peripherally. The mandapas of the southern temples are all flat roofed however long or of length they may be. Occasionally one finds them sloppy roofed, if the local climatic conditions so demand. This is in sharp contrast to what obtains in the northern prasada temples whether of Gujrat, Orissa, and Central India. There one invariably finds pyramidally rising or tired superstructure in a finial over the roofs of the mandapa in the axial or transverse line of the main Prasada, the superstructures being of the Ghantasamvarana type or its simplified Pitha Pida type. Though this scheme gives a distinct skyline of successively ascending finials from the top of the foremost or outermost Mandapa to that of the main Sikhara of the Prasada it does make a rather heavy cluster of towers and necessitates also the main Sikhara superstructure over the prasada sanctum to be relatively much higher than that of the Mandapas. The flat roof of the Mandapas, which are adjuncts to the main Vimana of the southern temple, allows always the Vimana, which is the most important and dominating entity to stand clearly against the skyline.

The very bold emphasis of the vertical off settings or corrugations from plinth upwards to the apex below the crowning elements reminiscent of the Bhadras or Ratha projections of the northern 'Rekha' Prasadas against the suffered persistence of the horizontal divisions of the superstructure could not very well offer the desired model. Rekha prasada is a typical northern style sanctuary form with curvilinear superstructure and emphasized by Bhadra projections on the sides and by Rekhas (curvilinear lines) crowned by a neck and amlaka with Kalasa on the top.

It is very relevant here to mention about Pidha deul which ordinarily denotes a structure with stepped or tired superstructure over the sanctum as in Kadamba Chalukya temples. The term is used in Orissa architecture for the Mandapas in front of the main prasada called Jagmohan or Smaller individual shrines with such superstructure as distinct from Rekha deul.

***The Bengal Tradition** —formative and transitional phases.*

Bengal in the eastern part of the country is known to have developed an individual culture different in certain aspects to that of the rest of India. In literature, in religious and philosophical speculations, in plastic arts etc, this region is found to have made important contributions. It therefore needs to be indicated whether Bengal had any significant achievement in architecture in as much as the standard works on Indian architecture hardly provide any such distinction.

In fact there exists extreme scarcity of monuments belonging to the pre Muslim phase surviving the wrath of time. Besides a few isolated temples reflecting a derelict condition in the western Bengal, the other memorials are lying in jungles clad mounds found scattered throughout the country. Excavations conducted at certain important sites revealed architectural edifices of immense significance in the history of Indian and southeast Asian architecture. The excavations of Paharpur (Dt Nawgaon), Maynamati (Dt Comilla), Mahasthangarh (Dt Bogra)— in Bangladesh and at Jagjivanpur (Dt Maldaha), Rajbaridanga or Rangamati (Dt Murshidabad) Khana Mihirer

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Dhipi at Berachampa, Chandraketugarh (Dt 24 Parganas N)— in West Bengal have placed before us the actualities of the hidden treasure in so far as comprehension of the excavated regions provide enough of a sustained and systematic culture of architecture in Bengal which are not only valuable but also adequate representative of a great tradition.

Apart from the standing edifices and excavated sites, adequate evidences are available in the form of inscription, travel accounts of the Chinese travellers including Fa Hien and Hiuen Tsang, various manuscripts and sculptural revelations testify to the erection and existence of every kind of edifices characteristic of the other parts of ancient India. The architectural activity in Bengal in fact had certain limitations in itself in as much as the main constraint was non-availability of stone within proximity as the primary building material. The large alluvial plain however provided the builders with rich clay which was utilized at random for such construction activity in the form of fired or baked bricks and terracotta architectural practice gained its root as the most popular medium with the passage of time.

In our earlier works 'Art of ancient Bengal Terracottas' and 'Islamic Art of Mediaeval Bengal Architectural Embellishments, we have adequately dealt with the background, production methodology as well as motifs and the broad classification of the art objects etc. We do not find enough grounds to repeat the same. Nevertheless the architectural activities of the ancient and proto mediaeval Bengal should be briefly narrated with a view to present the elements of continuity and the transition involved in the process of attainment of the exclusive milestone of the late mediaeval architectural gems spread over the vast tract of Bengal.

Ancient Bengal witnessed intensive architectural activities primarily with the processed pliable clay being baked in traditional kilns with the established indigenous technology and there exists an uninterrupted process of development having manifested altogether the immense capability of the hereditary architects or builders. As a common denominator of Indian art, Bengal also poised to fall within the ambit of the architectural waves in relation to forms, motifs and also styles adopted in northern as well as southern part of country also at the same time exploring the potentials of local characteristics as well as innovative traits of its highly sensitive people.

With the end of discussing the highlights of ancient architectural forms in Bengal it is pertinent to put up the nature of available vestinges belonging to religious establishments in Bengal of one or the other denomination as already indicated herein before.

a) **Stupa**— The remains of the stupa monuments or votive stupas available at various sites and other epigraphic as well as calligraphic evidences signify construction of stupas of different characteristics in Bengal some of which are as under—

   i) Bronze votive stupa of Ashrafpur— it consists of a cylindrical drum and hemispherical dome supported on a lotus over a high and slightly sloping basement which is square with one projection on each face that gives it a cruciform shape

   ii) Bronze votive stupa of Jogighopa (West Dinajpur)—it represents the ultimate transformation of a hemispherical structure into a column like shape due to an

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emphatic tendency towards elevation and elongation. The drum and the dome each represent a high cylinder. The drum as usual is ornamented with four figures in niches, one on each face while the dome as high as the drum is surmounted by Harmika.

iii) Bronze votive stupas from Paharpur (Rajshahi) and Jhewari (Chittagong)— each consists of a slightly budging dome supported on a cruciform basement.

iv) Replica on stone slab from north Bengal (Varendra Research society— Rajshahi)— a stupa of a tapering spire like shape that consists of a basement of three terraced stages and a comparatively high drum of seven concentric rings gradually receding in scale, a small dome, a square Harmika and Chatravali of eleven discs the topmost ending in a point.

v) Manuscript illustrations (Cambridge University manuscript No ADD : 1642 of the Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita— copied in NS 135/Ad 1015)

1. Mrigasthpana stupa in Varendra— over a tall drum rests the comparatively low hemispherical dome with the figure of Dhyani Buddha in a semi circular niche in front.
2. Tulkshetre Vardhamana stupa— Vardhamana— the miniature depicts two stupas of exactly identical design and elevation. Each shows a high basement square in plan with one projection on each face derived into three elaborately carved terraced stages separated by recessed moldings. Above is the drum of two stages ribbed in the lower and ornamented with lotus petals on the upper. Over it is placed the hemispherical dome and rest come the square Harmika in inverted stepped stages and the conical range of Chhatravali.
3. Dharmarajika Chaitya of Radha— it consists of a basement of three terraced stages, a cylindrical drum of two stages, a hemispherical dome, a square Harmika and a conical range of Chhatravali as the crowning member.

vi) With the ideas emerging out of the forms evident in the said votive stupas and manuscript illustration, the excavated remains of several structural stupas at Paharpur (Nawgaon), Maynamati hills (Comilla), and Bharatpur etc. have been notionally reconstructed by Dr S. K. Saraswati in his leading work 'Architecture of Bengal' (P 26-28) as under.

1. The missing upper elements are presumed to be consisting an elaborate drum probably with Buddha figures in ornamental niches, the plain hemispherical domes, the square or cruciform Harmika and the conical finial of Chhatravali rising in succession, one above the other from the basement upward.
2. A large number of such votive offerings have been available from the monastic area and the adjoining site of Satyapir Bhita at Paharpur. Such votive structures stand isolated from one another occasionally in a row.

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3. As evident from a terracotta plaque at Paharpur, the form of the dome was hemispherical
4. The Chhatravali appears to have been made up of terracotta convex discs of graded sizes each with a central hole placed one above the other. A large number of such discs have been found during the excavation at Paharpur.
5. At Kotila Mura, in the north direction of Salban Vihara at Maynamati, the upper elements of the composition except Harmika and Chhtravali have been preserved. The basement in each case is ornately designed. Over it placed the drum of cylindrical shape, which supports the hemispherical dome. The missing Harmika and Chhtravali were each apparently of the characteristic design, the former square or cruciform and the later conical with Chhatra discs rising up in tapering series. The three stupas stand in row and the central one seems to have been the most important of the three. Instead of being a solid structure, it is constructed hollow.

b) **Vihara**—The monastery in Bengal came to be an elaborate structural complex in brick with many adjuncts. At every instance, the traditional arrangement of four ranges of cell on four sides of an oblong inner quadrangle was followed. One monastery differs from the other only in size. Often a monastic establishment consisted of more than one storey and along the linear courtyard there usually ran a pillared verandah. In large establishments, the entrances took the shape of immense and imposing halls flanked by guardrooms, offices of the community of monks etc.

Reference of the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang as regards large monastic establishments in Bengal and subsequent excavations testifying the reference lead us to mention about some such establishments reflecting remarkable architectural achievements.

i) Bhasu Vihar— Mahasthan, Dt Bogura— Bangladesh (Pun-na-fa-tan-na) immense mound (app 800'*750'*40') seems to be a monastic organization of great magnitude with all its characteristic features

ii) Raktamrittika Vihara (Lo-to- mo- chin- in- Kie- to- na- su- fu- la- na-) the mound locally called Rajbaridanga had been excavated by the Department of Archaeology, University of Calcutta revealed that the Vihara seems to have been a collection of a number of smaller monastic blocks arranged on a regular plan with all other adjuncts like shrines, stupas, pavilions etc

iii) Biharail Rajbari— (Rajashahi— Bangladesh)— excavation expressed structural remains of monastery on the familiar ancient plan of rows of cells round a central countryard.

iv) Sompur Vihara of Dharmapala— (Paharpur— Nawgaon— Bangladesh) the name and fame of the Vihara was spread far and wide with respectable mention in the inscription from Bodhgaya and Nalanda and more frequently in translation of certian Sanskrit Buddhist texts. The Vihara followed the same traditional plan and was

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conceived on a much greater scale as the ruins unearthed at the site clearly show. The entire establishment occupying a quadrangle of more than 900ft externally on each side has high enclosure walls (12 to 13 ft height as preserved now) lined on the inside as many 177 cells excluding those of the central block in each direction. Mr. K N Dikshit has observed 'no single monastery of such dimension has come to light in India and the appellation 'Mahavihara' the great monastery as designating the place can be considered entirely appropriate (ASI 1927-28 p. 106)

v) Jaina Vihar of Guhanandi at Vatagohali— the Vihara has been found mentioned in the copper plate grant of (Gupta) the year 159 (AD 478-79). While it is difficult to ascertain the plan it is reasonably presumed that as monks chambers set around a quadrangular court.

vi) Salvan Vihara of Maynamati hills (Comilla Dt Bangladesh)- excavation conducted in 50's at the site brought to light structural complexes over an extensive area consisting of temples, stupas, monasteries etc. and a fairly large number of antiquities. The complex is seen to consist of a fairly large Vihara with usual plan of four monastic cells round a central court with a temple again of an unusual plan situated at the center

vii) Jagjivanpur Vihara at Habibpur (Dt. Maldaha) The Tulabhita mound located at Jagivanpur was partially excavated by the Director of Archaeology and Museums, Govt of West Bengal since 1992. The excavation revealed existence of a huge monasterial complex, which also was supported by a terracotta seal and a copper inscription. The exposed portion of the monasterial complex indicates existence of a specious courtyard surrounded by Verandah and cells. The gateway consists of front porch and rear porch connected by doorway. The rear porch is flanked on either side by two cells. A number of cells have been exposed meant for residential purpose of the monks. Probable location of a sanctum and a circumbulatory pathway around it is also evident. The structural scheme contains four circular bastion cum cell attached to the four corners of monastery, which is a significant feature.

viii) Some ancient structural edifices in brick at Chandraketugarh popularly known as Khana Mihirer Dhipi and Lal Masjid, Haroa, P.S.Deganga in the Dt of 24 Pargans (N), Panchthupi popularly known as "Panchastupa" dt Murshidabad either in standing or in excavated condition are yet to be attributed to religious affiliation neverthless it is circumstantially presumed that they are monastic structures with all traditional ingredients.

The technical efficiency and perfection of skill in brick laying, corner binding, breaking the bond in successive courses, occasional courses of headers in order to strengthen the courses as well as to relieve the monotony of ashler, use of Voussoir arches, where necessary the like etc are worthmentioning. The power and sense of design and compostion of builders are reflected in the execution of a vast scheme like Sompura Mahavihara and elsewhere in a smaller magnitude.

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c) Temple Architecture— the stage of formation, assimilation and culmination.

The ancient temples of Bengal have been characterized by the synthesis of northern as well as southern forms as detailed herein before and also appear to have assimilated the direct influence of Orissan architectural group apart from the development of indigenous standard under the local climatic conditions and economic as well as traditional superstructures.

The architectural members with different nomenclature as well as iconic and other sculptural embellishments were arranged or rearranged in different syntactical categories prevalent in different territorial segments of India. This was done mostly in keeping with the canons described in Silpasastras and/or making certain variations or deviations within acceptable norms, thereby giving rise to a distinct linguistic analogy. As already reiterated, the shrine itself in Southern India is termed as Vimana, which in Northern India is known as Prasada. The classification of Nagara, Dravida and Vesara in the south is found either appearing in grossly similar manners or in a variant of the form or like a cross between. Amalaka or Amalasara or Amalasila, which represents ribbed, lenticular or globoid part resembling the Amalaka (Indian gooseberry fruit) crowning the top of the northern style Sikhara as its characteristic also adopted as the top of Kadama Chalukya forms sometimes, as an alternative to the griva Sikhara component of southern Vimana form. The Sikhara on the other hand represents roof of the Vimana over the griva, domical or four sided with a Single finial, vaulted with many finials on ridge or apsidal with many finials over the horizontal part, while the southern Vimana form entails carrying a Sikhara with a stupi in general. The Kadamba Chalukya type or Kadamba Nagara type of south India resembles the Pidha deuls in Orissan Architecture or the Phansanakara edifices of the Gujrat regions in form and style. It will be evident that the tiered arrangements of sloppy roof slabs or cornices curved one with the other was best suited to a region of high rainfall and that is why the same practice has been found extended to various regions far and wide. The installation of overhanging cornics usually flexed from the terrace beyond the beam and joist end of the recesses of the Adhisthana like the Kumuda or Padma is commonly known as Kapota. The forward projections of the superstructure having a nasika front and enclosing a bas-relief sculpture inside the arch, which is ordinarily termed as Sukanasika, a north Indian phenomenon is also found to be adopted in southern Vimanas with small modifications. The Hara string of miniature shrines with Kuta (domical roof and a single finial or stupi), Sala Sidhar (Barrel vault, wagon top or inverted, kneel shaped) or Panjara (miniature apsidal shrines), which is a common and significant architectural member of the south has also made its way in several architectural executions of the north or elsewhere. Analogy of this type may however be drawn in respect of many architectural members and also the norms and practices being adopted in several parts of India. While the extremely rich temple architectural heritage of Orissa shows close affinity to the Kadamba Chalukya or Kadamba Nagara type of the simplest form of southern Vimana or the Pratihar Phansanakara edifies of the Gujrat region or Kalchuri temples of the

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northern or central India, the Orissan edifies emerged as a distinct identity and formed an independent standard itself.

Out of the two distinct varieties of Orissan temples i.e. Rekha type and Khakhara type, the shrine elevations of Rekha type was common and was also revealing two types of early Rekha Rathayukta and Late Rekha Padmagarbha. In Rekha Rathayukta type the wall surface is divided into three vertical segments with a large central niche which projects slightly from the wall surface. The Sikhara portion curves gently inwards and the portion is Pancharatha or divided into five vertical segments though the intermediary segments are not sharply distinguished in the earliest examples. The central portion is known as Raha, the corners are the Konakas and the intermediary ribs are called Anarthas. The front raha above the Shrine doorway is the broadest and has the most important sculptural embellishment with images that correspond to the deity enshrined therein. The late Rekha Padma garbha type was Pancharatha type. The projecting Parsha Devta niche is placed in the central Raha of the wall and the Konkas (corner) are curved as broad flat pilasters decorated in four portions. The intermediary section of the wall the Anarthas contain the side niches which are completed in imitation of narrowing 'Pidhas' roof and down the centre of the Pidhas is a vertical band of scroll work. The niches themselves are shrunk considerably in size and importance when compared to the side niches of Rathayukta temple, the same may be said to be Parsadevta niches.

The second category of shrine is the barrel vaulted Khakhara and the Silpa Prakash distinguished between two types of such shrines the Vaitalika and the Kamagarbha. The front side of the Vaitalika shrine and other two sides are large Vajramastakas (the elaborate dotted double arch decorating the central rib of the shrine tower) filled in with figures of deities. The back wall is divided into a number of niches of identical size with images within each. Each niche is completed as a barrel vaulted shrine. Above the recessed bandhana (a section of moulding separating the wall of the shrine from the tower) is the Sikhara portion, which curves gently inwards from both sides and is bereft of any carving. The late Khakhara Kamagarbha shrine wall is Pancharatha and is similar in treatment to the Padmagarbha type of Rekha temple. The Konka and the Anartha are treated as broad flat pilasters decorated with a scroll topped with a panel of erotic figures. The Anartha are treated as serpent pillars or as the flat decorative pilasters. The Sikhara narrows gradually to reach the rounded barrel vaulted top, which is compound of un-decorated blocks.

Apart from the said two varieties of shrine elevations it is evident that the roof of Orissan 'Mukhasala' commence as a flat structure and develops into a pyramidal one. The typical earlier specimens show a sloping roof projecting beyond the walls of the 'Mukhasala' with a clerestory above consisting of vertical uprights. A second and smaller roof, which is flat with sloping edges, top the structures. In a transitional phase between the flat and the pyramidal roofs it is observed that the rectangular pillared 'Mukhasala' has a final flat roof but with a number of 'Pidhas' (tiers) narrowing up to this flat roof. These are not roof

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levels but distinct 'Pidhas' except that ultimately the temple has a flat roof. There are separate Pidhas above the projections of two doorways and the one window and these terminate in a crouching lion and Amlaka after three Pidhas. The culmination comes with the pyramidal roof where we find a greater number of Pidhas in an uninterrupted row narrowing up to Kalasa at the apex.

Some of the authors are in opinion of the broad classification of Orissa temples in three categories having treated the 'Pidha' roofing arrangement as one of such categories. Neverthless while agreeing to such classfication, we have discussed the shrine elevation and roofing arrangements separately for the sake of convenience. Orissa due to its close proximity with the social, cultural, ethnic as well as political genesis of Bengal maintained a close affinity to its contemporary cultural traits. The temple architecture of the ancient Bengal up to a specific phase was also a common denominator with regard to shrine elevation, roofing and arrangement of several architectural members etc. in cases of certain representative ancient monuments still surviving the wrath of time. Neverthless the local characteristics did never lose their own place into the sphere of creativity reflected in execution of architectural themes and practices.

The basic elements of the 'Rekha' type of temples are elaborately discussed herein before either in the context of south Indian temples or Orissan temples. There had been distinct regional manifestation of such type, which is also sometimes represented at Nagra style. As per Silpa and Agama texts, 'Nagara style' is that which is four sided, square or oblong from the base to the finial or has a four sided Griva and Sikhara. The Rekha temples of Bengal had much in common with those of Orissa though certain individualities have been noticed. The Bengali type of Sikhara or Rekha temple consists of a single component– the sanctum (also called 'Deul' in local vocabulary) there being hardly any existence of assembly hall (mandapa) in front, characteristic of temples of this class in other parts of India including Orissa. Instead Bengal accommodated an approach or vestibule in the thickness of the projections in the front wall. While the five fold division of the sanctum cube evident in Bengali temples is in keeping with the typical Orissan style, there are certain other elements which are in common with the northern/southern or western arthitectural styles discussed hereinabove. The itemwise discussion of such aspect would render the sphere becoming unnecessarily lengthy in as much as the main target of the chapter is to highlight the great architectural and artistic achievements of the builders of the late mediaeval temples of Bengal.

Some of the significant and representative 'Sikhara' temples of ancient Bengal and/or indication of architectural activities through available evidences may be stated as under.

i) The Siddheswara temples of Bahulara (Bankura). With the remains of the standing brick structure it can be presumed that the temple was originally surrounded by subsidiary shrines all enclosed by a wall. Coomeraswamy ascribed the date of construction sometimes in 10th Century AD, which Mr. K. N. Dikshit wants to put

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to 11th Century AD. It is a 'Pancharatha' sanctum and the cube is derived axially into five sections. A vestibule evidently approached the shrine. From the provisions of 'Bhumi Amlaka at the corners it can be suggested that the Sikhara was crowned by a big 'Amlaka'.

ii) Jatar Deul (Sundarban 24 Parganas(s)) remembles Siddheswara temple of Bahulara in plan, elevation and decorative schemes.

iii) Boram (Purulia) The temple consists of sanctum cell only. It is 'Pancharatha' in ground plan. There is five fold divisions of the cubical section along the vertical axis. The entrance doorway is accommodated in the central Rathaka projections, which terminates at the top of the corbels. Presently the Amlakasila and the crowning elements disappeared.

iv) Deuliya (Bardhaman). The temple bears distinctive 'Nagara' feature. It is 'Pancharatha' ground plan. Cube of the sanctum is divided into five sections. Sanctum was originally enclosed by an ambulatory, which now disappeared.

v) Sonatpal (Bankura). The brick temple stands in heavily dilapidated condition. It is Pancharatha in plan having bold and emphatic projections accommodating the approach vestibule. It appears that there had been a big Amlaka as the crowning element of the tower.

vi) Two stone temple of Dihar Janta (Bankura) Sri Shareshwar and Sri Saileshwar temples resemble the Siddheswara temple of Bahulara in the aspects of plan, elevations etc.

The Bhadra type is a very common form arising out of the architectural culture being practised or exercised by the architects or builders from the very early days, in such materials as are easily available and can be conveniently handled. The form has been extensively used in northern type Rekha Prasadas or southern Vimanas. The gradual evolution of the type is traceable in development of the plan and use of several architectural members. The very bold emphasis of the vertical off setting or corrugation from plinth upwards to the apex below the crowning elements was reminiscent of the Bhadra or Ratha projections of Orissa as already mentioned hereinbefore, was also implemented in Bengal with some local variations in idioms or ingredients in such architectural ideas.

On an extant view, the type shows a superstructure which in a manner stands for the roof and rises up in receding tired stages separated by recesses capped ultimately by a finial of variable designs. There are reasons to presume that the form may be derived from local style of the construction of residential huts either square shaped or rectangular. The roof of square shaped huts is composed of four frames from four sides inclining toward the top and converging at the apex. In rectangular huts there are two frames inclining upward and meeting at the top. Based upon the number of frames used for roofting, the structure is termed as 'Do Chala', 'Char Chala' or 'At Chala' etc. The increase in the number of tired stages of the roof reflects tendency towards elaboration of the architectural design.

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While the manuscript illustrations or unearthed sculptures or votive templates or Chaityas provide significant clues on the type of monuments constructed in Bengal at the relevant time, the non availability of standing structures makes it difficult to draw inference on detailed plan layout of such identified monuments falling under this category. Generally the character of the Bengal style as evident from such specimens entails that the superstructure or the roof of tired stages is found to rest on highly ornate pillars topped by a three lobed arch fronting the shrine. The tired stages are in odd numbers and are crowned by an Amalaka and a finial. Even though this type of Bhadra temples has close association to Buddhism, it cannot be said that the same was an exclusive of the Buddhists as a whole. The Nagara temple style appears to have been adopted in accomodating an approach or assembly hall preceding the sanctum in Bengal. The Dhrmaraj temple at Hakanda at Mayapur in the district of Bankura exposes ambitious structures with a bigger approach hall in front, which however disappeared now. The Nandi Pavilion of the Ektesvara temple of Bankura and the Atbaichandi temple in the same district are the representative monuments of the Bhadra type of primitive and archive shape. Other temples signifying existence of such style have already been indicated in the earlier paragraphs dealing with Rekha and Pidha styles.

The Stupa Sirsha Bhadra type of temple represents a variety of Bhadra temples the tiered roofs of which are surmounted by a big sized stupa. The other variety of 'Sikhara Sirahsa Bhadra', which also is an extension of the Bhadra type, consists of the receding tired stages surmounted by a curvilinear Sikhara complete with Amlaka. This type continued to remain in Buddhist association only.

The excavated remains or standing structural remains signifying structural analogy in certain respect to the type of temple in Bengal have been the distinct architectural achievements at various sites of Bengal some of which are as under :

a. Mahasthangarh— Bangladesh (Bagura)
   i. Bairagi Bhita— it is indicated that the earlier structure was in a cruciform plan with re entrant angles.
   ii. Gobinda Bhita— the decoration of the walls by bands of terracotta plaques seems to be a characteristic mode of ornamentation.
   iii. Gokul Medh— it is platform of twenty four sides having in its center a circular structure.
b. Mainamati Hills (Comilla)— Bangladesh
   i. Salban Vihara— vestiges of fairly large brick temple occupying the centre of monastic complex have been found here. The temple shows four projecting chambers on four sides of central square, the whole surmounted by an ambulatory enclosed by a parapet wall.
   ii. Charpatra Mura— the remains indicate existence of a sanctum cella and a spacious hall in front, the two being covered by a joint passage. It is not now possible to determine the shape of the superstructure either of the hall or of the sanctum cella

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c. Paharpur— (Nawgaon) Bangladesh. Satyapir Bhita temple, the ground plan is of a square cross with angles of projections between the arms. It is seen to be rising in a number of receding terraces with an ambulatory enclosed by a parapet wall in each of the two upper terraces. The immense temple occupies the centre of vast monastic complex

d. Baigram— (Dinajpur) Bangladesh, it appears from the remains that the temple consisted of a square sanctum surrounded by a circumbulatory passages enclosed by a wall.

e. Chandraketugarh—Khana Mihirer Dhibi— Berachampa [24 Parganas (N)] excavations exposed remains of a temple complex representing several successive periods in the history. The sanctum cella is joined axially with a forward hall with further indication of a porticos in front.

f. Rangamati— Rajbaridanga— Dt— Murshidabad— excavations revealed existence of a structural complex, which is believed to be associated with the far famed Rakta Mrittika Vihara. It consisted of a rectangular shrine with a shallow projection in the middle of each of the three sides and with a rectangular porch of smaller length in front. Existence of four subsidiary shrines is also indicated. As a Panchayatana complex it is found to be surmounted by a wall. The temple is dated not later than the seventh century.

g. Jagjivanpur (Maldaha)— At Tulbhita mound, the exposed portion of the monasterial complex indicates existence of a spacious courtyard surmounted by Verandah and cells. The monastery is approached from the east through a staircase now in complete ruins leading to the entrance gateway. The gateway consists of front porch and a rear porch connected by a doorway. The rear porch is flanked on either side by two cells. A number of cells have been exposed meant for the residential purpose of the monks. A sanctum with a circumbulatory pathway around it is also indicated. The structural scheme contains four circular bastion cum cell attached to four corners of the monastery is a significant feature of the complex.

The Invasion of Islamic Architectural Trends

After the conquest of Nuddiah and Lakhnauti by Md. Bin Bakhtiar at the closing of the twelfth century, it took about a hundred years to bring the whole of Bengal under Muslim occupation. In Bengal no monuments worth the name of the fourteenth century has survived and of those of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries too, we have hardly a few monuments. It is a pity that of the high architectural traditions of the pre Muslim period of Bengal no continuation of the form of early specimens of the Muslim period is evident to us. The mosque of Zafar Khan Gazi— AH 698 at Triveni, Dt - Hooghly, believed to be the earliest monument is still surviving the passage of time. The mosque contains direct materials derived from Hindu temples nearby. It is covered by ten large hemispherical domes having an oblong site plan. The shape of arches, the design of the concentric arched squinch system of the support of the dome in the interior and also the Mihrabs do not seem to have any distinct identity as such. It is in the permeation of the corresponding imperial style of Delhi.

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The initial period of Muslim rule in Bengal between 1203 AD & 1338 AD does not signify any significant architectural activity, as specimens pertaining to the same are extremely rare. Bengal enjoyed the spells of independent status from 1338 AD to 1538 AD and thereafter for about two hundred years came under the Sur and Mughal rule. The uninterrupted rule of the provincial dynasties in the pre Mughal period helped the evolution and development of regional style which is evident in several surviving monuments relating to the period

Neverthless the first phase of Indo-Islamic architecture in Bengal relates to the representation of the days of imperial rule of Delhi sovereigns who had then extended hands through the Governors of Bengal.

For all practical purposes the Islamic architectural activity in Bengal have been classified period wise in two different segments repeated as under.

Sec A	i.	The initial period	1203-1338 AD
	ii.	The period of independent Kings of Bengal	1338-1538 AD
	iii.	The period of Sher Shah's Family and his Afghan successors	1538-1576 AD
Sec B	i.	The Mughal rule in Bengal	1476-1740 AD
	ii.	The Nawabs period	1740 to transfer of Bengal to East India Company

After the disintegration of the imperial rule of Delhi the regional trends in architecture were developed of which the schools of Bengal (1338-1538 AD), Gujrat (1400-1572 AD), Begumpur (1360-1480 AD), Gulbarga (1347-1422 AD), Bidar (1422-1512 AD) and Malav (1405-1569 AD) deserve special mention.

The general characteristics of the monuments pertaining to first three phases are ordinary as under :

1. The influence of the imperial Tughlaq style of architecture appears to be dominant in a few monuments. The square plan with the pronounced batter of the walls, the shapes of the arches, concentric arched squinch systems supporting the dome from the interior etc, are directly borrowed from the style. This apart the plainness of the exterior having simple ornamentation of the rosettes and lotus leaves between mouldings is also the contribution of the style. The dome is strikingly elongated which appears to be influenced by Buddhist trends.

ii. While the basic features remained the same, the shape of the dome in the second type of monuments is hemispherical. The other features are considerable slope of its wall, tall and narrow arches, single domed roof with a cornice of

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brick mouldings. The composition are more balanced, facades are elaborate and dome is pleasingly contoured.

iii. The third type is featured by trabeate construction of the interior of the prayer hall, flat roof, the brick mouldings of the cornice, existence of Manaras, bulbuous shape of the domes at the top tapering shafts of the arches in the Central Mihrab.

The typical Bengal type of Indo Islamic architecture represents its landmark in the Eklakhi Tomb of Pandua (middle of 15th century). Nevertheless the concepts underlying such style were implemented elsewhere also with minor variation. The local elements, which distinctly found place in such pattern developed, were curvilinear roofs, square and oblong plans with octagonal, towers of turrets at the angles hemispherical domes and their regulated numbers. The peculiar treatment of the prayer hall also is noteworthy. The multi pointed arched entrances of its facade, the central one is larger opening into a central compartment of corresponding size roofted by an usually pointed vault and entered through a projecting demi portico with octagonal buttresses at its two corners are also characteristic.

The provincial style had therefore peculiarity of bay wise arrangement of prayer halls, the number of domes corresponding to chambers and their corbelled supports, octagonal turrets, curvilinear parapets. The composition as well as arrangement of architectural members signifies the originality of builders and their aesthetic impulse. After the annexation of Bengal under the Mughal empire, the novel ideas and techniques of the celebrated master builders and architects of the empire also asserted upon the local traditions. The original concepts of inner Chambers, domed halls, columns, Cuppola galleries, the minarets, the vaulting of portals were to some extent modified or refined so as to improve upon the overall look. The central Asian technologies, which invaded the architecture of Delhi, also got infiltrated to Bengal to a very limited extent, which obviously enriched the local language or version. Neverthless the infrastructural or traditional elements prevailed upon which is evident in profuse terracotta decorations of non-figurative art on several Islamic monuments. This is of much aesthetic value and had far reaching consequences in creation as well as formation of further tradition on the soils of Bengal.

Interestingly enough, large number of late Muhammedan architecture were constructed in the last two capitals of the Mughal subahs of Bengal i.e. Rajmahal and Dacca. The sphere of mutual interactions of culture however broadened within the framework of Mughal empire enabling the Bengal not only to derive positive gains of external trends but also to reach at the other imperial and territorial styles elsewhere in India.

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The curvilinear roofing of the mosques in keeping with the local 'Chalaghar' (thatched cottage) shows drastic modifications of the other forerunners in other parts of the country besides adoption of the local engrailed arch motif. The Eklakhi Tomb of Hazrat Pandua while representing the oldest monument of this type, expanded the trend in 'Sath Gambuz Mosque of Bagerhat (Khulna), Kherua Mosque of Bagura. Jame Mosque at Gaur and at several such places. These features were also exported outside Bengal and adoption of the same is evident in 'Bangla Mahal' at Agra fort, 'Moti Masjid' at Delhi fort and also in Rajput architecture at Alwar, Amber and Jodhpur.

The construction of Manara or Madhana either as independent monuments or supplemental annexure to other monuments is clearly a distinctive feature with or without any religious association in the mediaeval Bengal architecture. The following manaras are significant in the contemporary architectural portfolio—

a) Manara of Adina Masjid— Pandua— Single Madhana
b) Manara of Chhota Pandua— Hooghly—Single Madhana
c) Firoj Manara— Gaur— Single Madhana
d) Manara of Ruku Khan— Devkot— Single Madhana
e) Manaras of Sath Gambuj Masjid— Bagerhat— Front corner Madhana.
f) The Nimsarai Manara— Maldaha— Chirag Dan (Lamp tower)
g) Manara of Adina Masjid— Hazrat Pandua— Corner Turret.
h) Manara of Eklakhi Mausoleum— Hazrat Pandua— Corner Turret.
i) Manara of Dakhil Darwaja— Gaur — Corner Turret.
j) Manara of Quadam Rasul Mosque— Gaur— Corner Turret.
k) Manara of Tomb Hazi Khwaja Shahbaj— Dacca — Corner Turret.

While most of the mediaeval monuments lack terracotta ornamentation, we find that the decorative elements of non figurative representation of designs-traditional, folk as well as those borrowed alien trends are manifested in a number of representative monuments— some of which are of high artistic merit. The trend, of course bears some, passive reflections of the rich heritage of terracotta skills carried forward by generations of natural artists on the soils of Bengal since early days. Some such ornamented Islamic monuments are as under :

Dt— Maldah

1. Eklakhi Mausoleum— Hazrat Pandua
2. Adina Mosque— Hazrat Pandua
3. Tantipara Mosque— Gaur
4. Chamkati Mosque— Gaur
5. Quadam Rasul Mosque— Gaur
6. Daras Bari Mosque— Gaur
7. Ganamanta Mosque— Gaur

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8. Khania Dighi Mosque— Gaur
9. Jhan Jhaniya Mosque— Gaur
10. Dakhil Darwaja— Gaur
11. Firoj Minar— Gaur

Dt— Birbhum

1. Matichurh Masjid— Rajnagar

Dt— Dacca

1. Baba Adam's Moaque— Rampal
2. Goaldia Mosque— Sonargaon

Dt— Pabna

1. Nabagram Mosque
2. Shahjapur Mosque

Dt— Mymensingh

1. Shah Mohammad's Mosque— Egar Sindur.
2. Mosque of Masjidpara— Egar Sindur.
3. Gauri Mosque— Egar Sindur.
4. Sadi Mosque— Egar Sindur.

Dt— Tangail

1. Jami Mosque— Atia

Dt— Rajshahi

1. Bagha Mosque— Rajshahi

Dt— Sylhet

1. Shankarpara Mosque— Shankarpara

Dt Faridpur—

1. Aulia Mosque— Pathrail.

Late mediaeval temple architecture— Culmination, expansion and contraction

Long after the concepts and practices of Islamic art of architecture gained ground in Bengal, the inner contradictions remaining in sublimity under coercion of socio political factors started transforming to realms of artistic creativity on the wake of revivalist Bhakti movement— which brought great changes and developed syncretisation. In Bengal Vaishnava hymnist

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Chaitanyadev waged war against caste barries and social discrimination, traversed the whole area preaching love, affection and kindness.

The movement generated immense artistic activity and opened the doors of the human souls which accepted all finer inherited achievements as well as the gains of emerging trends to create a new version not only of the art and literature but also of the architectural creativity of the common people. The economic redistribution and the social stratification also contributed to erection of innumerable temples in the core or heartland of the village communes as sacred tasks or spiritual obligation of rural elites irrespective of castes or races which have been elaborately dealt with in other chapters of the work. We would emphasise that due to a new look into the caste stratification or economic redistribution, a section of beneficiaries emerged in the process obtaining higher social recognition, contemplated social mobility which found reflection in mitigation of the contradictions in the social and spiritual order and commencement of intensive temple architecture and efflorescence of art activity. The spirit of radicalism also generated an atmosphere of common ritual platform involving the rank and file masses and some sort of universalisation prevailed.

However before proceeding to the common features entailing upon the architectural edifices of the period as a whole, we would like to express our inadequacy of technical knowledge to provide any new material or new dimension in so far as the area has already been dealt with by distinguished scholars extensively or elaborately from time to time leaving the humble author a very little scope for interfering the process of scholastic contributions.

The eminent research work of David. J. Maccutchion in Late Mediaeval temples of Bengal detailing minutely the field observations as well as deriving logical inferences on the variety of temple architecture, recording of trends and divergences in exhaustive manner is a dictionary of such monuments for any student of Bengal architecture. Remarkable contributions in this field have been made by Sri Sarashi Kumar Saraswati, Sri Amiya Bandopadhayay, Sri Manik lal Sinha, Sri Mohit Roy, Sri Tarapada Santra, Sri Sudhir Kr. Mitra, Sri Satish Chandra Mitra, Smt. Julekha Haque, Sri Panchanan Roy, Sri Chittranjan Dasgupta, Sri Hitesh Ranjan Sanyal and many other distinguished contributors. Since our area of discussion is primarily related to the aesthetic aspects of the terracotta art relating to the period, we would as far as practicable highlight the points which are relevant to the discussions after recording the characteristic features of such monuments and a detailed list of such late mediaeval terracotta temples district wise forming part of the chapter in annexture.

We did extensive field work on the subject, and was guided by the passion for the tremendous potential underlying the artworks spread even in the remote corners of Bengal. We shall therefore expect our readers to condone us of errors or ommissions in this regard— if taken place in the line of discussion hereinafter.

The apparent common features of such temples may be summerised as under before entering into the detailed observation of the forms as well as characters of the late mediaeval temples of Bengal.

1. Compared to stupendous, monumental, intricate and affluent structural temple complexes representing northern, southern, western or any sectoral or dynastical identity, the late mediaeval

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temples of Bengal are nuclear forms which are elegant, small and simple rather simplest forms—having only the following essential parts.

i) Adhisthana or base.
ii) Bhitti or wall.
iii) Sikhara or roof.
iv) The finial

The brick structural temples had massive walls measuring even 25" to 40" thickness. The basement was laid bottom even upto a depth of 9 to 10 fts in keeping with the height of the stupendous structure thereupon. Most of the edifices are single storied (ektala). The multi storied (tala) temples have the upper stories mostly non functional or decorative and are of lesser height than the Aditala (Ground floor).

The other parts of temples mentioned in the earlier discussion have either been dispensed with or modified suitably through reduction, redistribution or annexation depending upon the circumstances.

2. The Adhisthana or base is constructed at a slightly higher level.

3. Usual plan of the temples is square, rectangular or octagonal or in a very few cases, hexagonal.

4. Existence of temple with triangular plan is also evident at Iswaripur, Dt. Jessore (Chanda Bhairava Temple), which is believed to the constructed in 16th Century AD.

5. The rafters of the roof project beyond the wall, forming well formed eaves like Kupotas. (overhanging cornice)

6. There is no hard and fast rule for constructing temples facing any specific direction. Neverthless most of the temples have been constructed facing the east or the south.

7. In the broader sense, the majority of such temples consist of

a. Devakostha or Garbhagriha or the main sanctum solely and exclusively.
b. Attachment of covered passage in front or more sides or varandah of the Garbhagriha is also found in certain cases.
c. Distal half of the sanctum with two separate pillars treated as if a space for accommodating the devotees within the temple.
d. A circumbulatory is generally existing round the shrine chamber with or without roof.

8. In certain cases where the circumbulatory existed, small rooms were constructed in the cardinal or corner directions. The rooms were kept open on two sides. Staircases for upper storeys in case of 'Ratna' temples were generally raised from the rare corner of the main sanctum or from such rooms.

9. The deity or images for worship were either placed in the niches on the rare walls and such niches were profusely ornamented or on certain adhisthana placed in the center of the rare wall of the Garbhagriha.

10. A system of forming the topmost or ultimate member of the temple in the domical shape through arrangement or manuvouring of squinch which was a direct contribution of Islamic architecture in Bengal was adopted in certain late mediaeval temples of Bengal. The architects

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did not face difficulties to utilize the advanced technology in inward effecting of the brick courses over the octagonal or polygonal bases developed through the squinch raised at a definite height of the standing walls of the temples.

11. Normally there are three entrances on the eastern or southern side of the main sanctum only. On the remaining three sides there are niches or false doors. The niches or false doors are sometimes decorated by sculptures fitted to suit the space. In a few cases entrances are found on both east and west.

12. Temples without any attachment of passage in front have single entries. The interior of the temples is generally inaccessible to any except the ordinated priesthood. What the people generally perceive is in fact an external view of the sanctum.

13. The roofs are either curvilinear or flat. The sloppy or pent roofs rest on rafters with their overhanging eaves on the outer walls sometimes supported by brackets sprung up from outer wall or sloping down from the beams. The brackets are shaped in various moulded decorative forms like reclining images of deities, women, acrobat human figures, decorative floral designs etc.

14. In certain cases, the traditional system of roofing was followed. The superstructure was raised up over the cella by a system of internal corbelling. Successive inward offsetting or corbelling in of the brick courses over walls to reduce the space to be roofed over to an ultimate small opening of the top that can be covered by a slab overlapping.

15. We find impressive arched gateway to the shrine which are in the form of multirecessed arches or cusped arches or of the engrailed arched motifs placed either between pillars or on the main doorway to the sanctum. The chief decorative motif or figure on the frontal of any entrance or door lintel extend even to the Raha overdoor. The decorative motifs so portrayed are of very popular mythological tales like 'Mahisasuramaradini Durga', the Ramayana war or other popular Ramayana episodes, the Mahabharata war and other popular Mahabharata episodes including that of the scenes representing different myths of the Devi cults, or depicting Krishnaleela etc. Similar such tales are also found potrayed on the space of Raha over the lintel of three other false doors on the other sides.

16. In order to carry the load or sustain the tension of the three arches formed on the gateway, the two pillars in the centre which were shaped octagonal or polygonal were called 'Purna Stambhas' and the two others annexed to the wall were called 'Ardhastambhas'. The pillars are profusely ornamented with terracotta designs including brackets on the pillars. The intervening octagonal or polygonal portion between the bottom and top portion also contain decoration as good as of the entablature.

17. The temple entablatures consist of relief sculptured bricks suitably arranged over walls and pillars either on the facade or on each to its four faces, in the regions of 'Uttara' (Beam), Vajana, Vallabhi, Kapota, Alinga and Antari. The central reliefs on the side and rear faces corresponding to the door opening on the east or west have false doors inset between the pilasters.

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18. It cannot be deniable that these monolithic or less structural temples signify an outstanding feature which counts the sculptures more dominating or important over the architecture. This was facilitated by the softness of clay as a material for sculptural activity and the inclination of the builders to exploit the spaces to the maximum possible extent.

19. At the terminating points of the arches on the gateway half circular wavy rolled cornices were built up in certain cases, which appeared to be of leafy pattern. Appearance of such decorative elements at such delicate spaces is also one of the distinctive features of late mediaeval Bengal temples.

The unusual rise of the construction activity of temples in late mediaeval Bengal is a phenomenon which has to be considered in the perspective of socio economic atmosphere prevailing at the relevant time and also the qualitative change in the religious life of the people due to invocation of a radical belief by the great men born on the soils of Bengal dispensing with the abuses and shortcomings of an existing social stratification persisted for the last many centuries. This took place at a time when construction of temples of the highly esteemed schools elsewhere in India showed a declining trend. We have already discussed earlier that Bengali architects while assimilating the gains of the incoming trends, exhibited enormous creativity in the formation of new standards through experimenting, formulating and innovating new forms of architecture within all sorts of financial and political stringencies.

As we have already observed, the recorded literature on the architectural achievements of the Bengal architects during the subject period have been many. There is still scope to reinforce or deal with the set of facts revealed through the existing pioneering research works in the field by distinguished scholars and researchers.

Late mediaeval brick temples of Bengal bear two broad categories at the outset— one of which bears a continuty in the tradition of Bengal from ancient time and also as a common denominator of the similar other trends of the subcontinet— particularly the rich tradition of Orissa. The other is of different indigenous standards developed over a period of time which is truly regional in character. The first one is of 'Rekha' variety— which is a traditional north Indian variety— cultivated and culminated in Orissa as already mentioned hereinbefore. It is expedient therefore to introduce the earlier discussion in brief to take an account of the architectural edifices belonging to the school in various parts of Bengal at the relevant time.

Besides roofing patterns, temple plans in late mediaeval Bengal have also been articulated in terms of varied structural elevations thereby evidencing the effective creative faculties in the contemporary architecture. The plans are commonly as under.

a) Square or rectangular shaped.
b) Triangular
c) Hexagonal
d) Octagonal
e) Twelve sided.

While majority of the structural edifices are square or rectangular, the hexagonal or octagonal structures have been mostly used for construction of Rashmanchas, Dolmanchas or Mathbaris,

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though octagonal temples are also not quite rare. The lone exception in the plan having resorted to triangular shape is found only at Chanda Bhairava Temple at Iswaripur, Jessore. The Rashmanchas or Dolmanchas or Mathbaris are being taken up separately as distinctly different types of installations in this book and the octagonal or hexagonal temples are being mentioned in the fold of different classification of roofting patterns being presented hereinafter.

I. REKHA— Akin to the temples of this form in Orissa, the adjoining districts of Bengal more or less adopted the 'Rekha' superstructure in brick and morter in a big way at a much later period when the homeland of such form itself suffered contraction. Rekha, as already mentioned was a traditional northern style sanctum with curvilinear superstructure emphasized by the 'Bhadra' projections on the sides (central), relieved or projected part from each side of the body of the Vimana or Prasada, as distinct from corner projections (karna) and by 'Rekhas' (curvilinear lines) crowned by a neck and 'Amlaka' with kalasa on the top.

According to plan, such temples are ordinarily four sided from base to finial and therefore conform to the norms of Nagara style as mentioned in the Silpa and Agma texts. Generally there exists a hall in front of square or rectangular shrine containing the image of worship which is known as Mukhasala, which is mostly rectangular— either supported by six or eight pillars or remains open. The standard Indian convention of facing the temples towards the east— enabling the image of worship to be illuminated by the rising sun was strictly followed in Orrisa— but not so strictly in Bengal. The further provision of architectural texts however warranting construction of shrines as Siva or Vishnu temples— as squares, or of those dedicated to devi as rectangular also is not found to be scrupulously followed in Bengal.

The Orissan 'Rekha' variety, as we have already seen, seems to have two different types, developed in course of time. The first one is Early Rekha Rathayukta and the second one is Late Rekha Padmagarbha. The early stage of the 'Rekha' shrine i.e. 'Rathayukta' bears some distinctive features as per 'Silpa Prakasha'. The Rathayukta wall surface known as the Bada (the wall of the temple as separate from the tower above it) is Triratha (divided into three vertical segments) with a large central niche which projects slightly from the wall surface. It is evident that Orissan 'Mukhasala' commences as a flat structure and develops into a pyramidal one. The earliest phase represents a sloping roof projecting beyond the walls with a clerestory above comprised of vertical uprights allowing light and air into the temple.

A second and smaller roof which is flat with sloping edges tops the structure. A transitional phase between flat and pyramidal roof— consisting of a finial flat roof with six pidha, (tiers) narrowing up to the flat roof is also seen. However the culmination comes with pyramidal roof having twelve pidhas in an uninterrupted row narrowing up to a Kalasa at the apex.

The wall of the temple as separate from the tower above it is termed as 'Bada' and the wall area in a recessed section is called 'Bandhana' (a section of moulding separating the wall of the shrine from the tower). The wall is purely vertical upto bandhana and above this the 'Sikhara' portion commences to curve gently inwards. The 'Sikhara' is generally 'Pancharatha' (divided into five vertical segments), though the intermediary segments are sharply distinguished. The

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central portion is known as 'Rahas', the corners as 'Konakas' and the intermediary ribs are called 'Anarthas'. The front Raha above the shrine door is the broadest and has the most important sculptural embellishment.

The Konakas (corner ribs) of the sikhara are divided into five horizontal units by Amalakis (flat, fluted, cushion like shapes) and each unit has a further three sub levels. At the top of the Sikhara are four lions placed at the four corners in certain cases. Above is large Amalaka which in a Shiva Shrine is topped with a Kalasa and trident and in a Vishnu temple with a chakra.

The Late Rekha Padmagarbha Shrine, the walls of which were earlier Triratha now become 'Pancharatha'. The central Raha is found to project the Parsa-Devta niche. The Konakas (corners) are carved as broad pilasters decorated in four portions at the top is a Bhara Bahaka (figures carved at certain strategic points to show that they are supporting sections of the temple) upholding the rest of the Konaka. The intermediary sections of the, the 'Anarthas' contain the side niches which are completed in imitations of a narrowing 'Pidha' roof and down the center of the Pidhas is a vertical band of scroll work. The niches themselves have shrunk considerably in size and importance when compared to the side niches of 'Rathayukta' temples. As per Silpa Prakasha the 'Sikhara' of a Padmagarbha temple is to be left plain. Nevertheless the later phase of this variety in Orissa, the Sikhara no longer stayed plain. In brief, we have already seen the sanctum with curvilinear sikhara (Rekha) is known as Rekha deul and the Mandapa— which is called Jagmohana with a pyramidal roof of Pidhas (tiers) is known as Pidha deul— forming components of a single architectural scheme. The later Orissan developments signify addition of two more mandapas known as 'Nata Mandapa' (Dancing hall) and Bhoga Mandapa (hall of offerings) in the same axis.

As already mentioned, due to territorial proximity and common economic as well as political integration for sometime, the influence of the Orissan traditional architecture on the architectural idioms of the neighbouring districts of Midnapore and to some extent in the district of Bankura was formidable. The observations of eminent scholars in classification of Rekha form of temple architecture in Bengal are quite relevant for putting up an idea on the extent of assimilation of Orissan trends into the local forms.

The single unit shrines without any annexation to Mukhasala is a feature of the Khiching school of architecture in the district of Mayurbhanj, in particular are the certain distinct features as reflected in Khicha Keshvari temples. In such temples walls have been perfectly put together as 'Pancharatha' temple. The central Parsa devata niche (the deities placed in large niches on three exterior walls on the shrine and closely associated with the god to whom the temple is dedicated) contained powerful and superbly carved images and the Anartha (intermediary vertical rib of the shrine tower or wall) and the Raha (central vertical segment of the tower or walls) have the tracery of interwined Chaitya arches. The sikhara is constructed exceedingly tall. The typical "Bho' arch (styled arch elaborated dotted double arch decorating the central rib of the shrine tower) are not found in the presently renovated forms of such temples.

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The temple construction activity in Bengal was intensified during seventeenth to nineteenth century AD and this phase in fact, gained a pace at a time when such activity was showing a declining trend in Orissa itself. The Bengal form of sikhara temple was much simplified, brief and suitably modified having dispensed with several aspects or redesigned or re-created taking into account the achievements of the local architecture and or creative impulse of the architects. Neverthless the most glaring example of the adoption of Khiching school of architecture is evident in the temple of Madanmohan at Gilakatiya (Gopiballavpur P.S), Midnapore— which is in a close of proximity of Mayurbhanj district.

David J. Maccutchion has elaborated his classification of the type more meticulously and we do not have any scope to make any further addition to what has already been on record. However considering the needs of the text, we have to take the opportunity for mentioning his observations in a nut shell.

1. Smooth curvilinear— 'Pancharatha' type sanctum showing curvilinear superstructure emphasized by 'Bhadra' Projection from each side of the body curving gently inwards towards sikhara upto the crowning element.

This type is segmented as :

a) Large smooth curvilinear— The Jharaswer and Rameshwar temple of Rajnagar (P.S. Panskura, Midnapore) (19th century), the Siddheswara Siva temple of Brahmankhalisa (Dantan, Midnapore) (19th Century), the Sitala temple at Ajuria (Daspur, Midnapore), etc, are representative of this type.

b) Small smooth curvilinear— This particular type is adopted mostly in the district of Midnapore and on a sporadic basis in the districts of Bankura, Burdwan, and Hoogly. The temples are mostly plain with extensive mouldings includings Sikhara topped pilasters. The Krishna and Balaram temples and twin deuls of Kishore Roy and Nikunja Bihari of Bishnupur (Bankura) are examples of this type, besides certain other variants of tall and slim type, with carved cornice and with ridged inverted chalice tower at several places of Daspur P.S, Ghatal P.S, and Khanakul P.S., Hooghly.

II) Despite Maccutchion's classification of Rekha shrines citing curvilinear temples without Varandah or base mouldings, as Birbhum variant, we do not find any significant brick temple falling under this category. The subcategories of smooth ridged sikharas therein is too meticulous, in so far as barring some small dilapidated Siva temples at Deocha (Mohammad bazar), Birbhum smooth and Bhairavanatha temple of Mallarpur (Mohammad bazar), Birbhum Ridged, there exists no other brick temple worth mentioning under this subcategory.

III) Rekha (Ridged curvilinear)— This was the most popular form widely practised in 'Rekha' category in Burdwan and Birbhum districts and its adjoining areas of Midnapore-Hoogly. Nevertheless the trend also in also prevalent in Khulna district of Bangladesh as well as in Dinajpur district also. The sikhara is ridged with horizontal bars in the shape of straight lines. The ridging extends in some cases even down to the base and the Ratha projections have been made shallow and clustered to the corners bearing a wide central Ratha. The crowning elements of Amlaka or Kalasa are created as small. The facade in many cases in profusely ornamented with terracotta decorations.

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The decorative arrangements were however similar to the other types of terracotta temples of chala or Ratha varieties. The form of temples pertaining to the earlier phase gradually recorded certain variations in the later phase with regard to projections of layers on the doorways, Rahas, decorative schemes etc. The sikhara was more lightly ridged either inclining inwards towards the top or give a pointed shape. In nineteenth century, wide bands replaced the ridges in certain cases. While a single arched gateway is common, the triple arch ways are also seen occasionally.

The Rekha shrines magnificiently redesigned in late mediaeval Bengal architecture find their hallmarks in Ayodhya Math of Kodla (17th-18th century) in which the ridges appear right from the base to the finial on a 'Pancharatha' spire with profuse terracotta decoration on all four sides. The projected front Rahas do not appear and elevation appears to be simple but extremely delicate. We also observe similar type of temple at Baidyapur (Kalna) in the district of Burdwan alongwith a porch with elaborate terracotta decoration on all the four sides.

The tightly ridged temples as already mentioned have unusual concentration in the districts of Birbhum— Burdwan. The temples are all 'Siva' temples— which provokes serious thoughts as regards the reasons therefor. Nevertheless we find a single temple of this type at Panchthupi in the district of Murshidabad which is with 'Nava Ratna' sikharas and appears to be of Panchayatana group. The terracotta decorations on the facade are entirely non figurative showing close affinity to the Islamic type of decoration. The hexagonal 'Siva' temple at Sitahati (Ketugram), Burdwan is also a remarkable edifice falling under the category.

The Birbhum— Burdwan variants signify standard (small)— nineteenth century temples, as per observations of D. Maccutchion, are purely of indigenous version 'Bangla Deuls'— constructed in a form developed by Bengali Architects. Right from the 'Adhisthana' to the 'Bhitti', such temples bear the common structural arrangement— as evident in similar other types of Chala or Ratna temples with the exception of Sikhara or finial which is basically belonging to Sikhara stylization. The terracotta decorations of such temples are elaborate and descent. The three Siva temples at Raipur, Bhattacharjeepara, Mankar (Galsi)— Burdwan signifies concentration of this architectural form at this place. The Pratapeswar temple at Ambika Kalna is also a very beautiful temple having open varandah on all four sides, and bearing decorative arrangements of terracotta plaques on all four sides. Similar in the case of Jora siva temple at Kalikapur, Ausgram, Burdwan where terracotta is found basically on the facade, Khanadaghosh, Rupsawari (PS- Khanadaghosh), Sribati (Katwa), Chakdighi (Jamalpur), Ukhra and Burdwan town, are some of the small terracotta decorated temples mostly constructed in the nineteenth century. In Bangladesh we also find a temple falling under the category at Belamala in the district of Bagua (Dwadas siva temple).

In Birbhum, we find a good number of temples falling under the category, constructed in nineteenth century showing detailed ornamentation or effloroscence of terracotta images on facades. The siva temple of Ilambazar, the Dewanji temple at Hetampur, the Siva temple at Chandanpur and also at Thupsara, Surul, Supur, Itanda, Adityapur (Bolpur), Hat Serandi (Nannur), Dubrajpur or Seuri kalibari, etc are representing the type.

The Siva Mandir at Mukhira, Dignagar, Bahadurpur (Ausgram), the Jora Siva Mandir at Putsuri (Dt. Burdwan), Lakshmi Janardan temple at Debipur (Memari, Burdwan) and Radha Damodara

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Rekha shrine with Antarala and Jagmohana —Sarbamangala Temple-Garbeta Midnapore.

temple of Gohogram (Galsi, Burdwan) fall within the category of the good architectural edifces with elaborate terracotta decoration on the facades.

The projections of the Ratha on this type of temple is greater in the case of Siva temple of Ukhra (Andal, Dt. Burdwan) in which case also, the facade is found to be elaborately decorated with terracotta images.

The octagonal ridged Rekha temples of Late mediaeval Bengal with profuse terracotta ornamentations signifying a distinct aesthetic category are masterpieces of contemporary architectural gains, some of which are as under.

i) Temple at Marketplace at Ilambazar, Birbhum, constructed in nineteenth century AD.
ii) Siva Temple at Lalbazar, Supur, Birbhum-nineteenth century AD.
iii) Sankara Siva Temple at Sribati, Katwa, Burdwan-1836 AD.
iv) Siva temple at Mistripara, Banpas, Bhatar, Burdwan-nineteenth Century AD.

This apart, there exists certain other wide ridged (Banded) Sikhara temples mostly in the districts of Burdwan-Birbhum which are generally devoid of terracotta ornamentation except that of Deuleswara temple at Deoli (Bolpur-Birbhum) and Serandi (Nanur-Birbhum).

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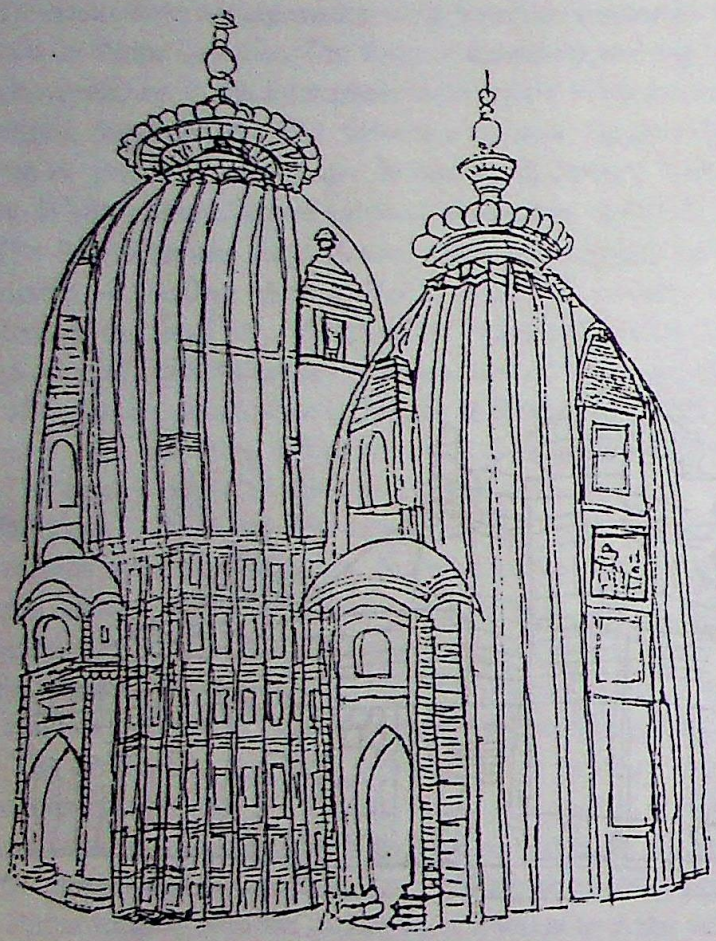

Pancharatha Rekha Temple Jhareswar & Rameshwar Temple Panskura Midnapure

Yet another category of Sikhara temple bearing uncommon features of Sikhara— straight edged pyramidal with horizontal ridging and shallow ratha projections as evident in Handial temple is Jagannatha at Taras in the district of Pabna, Bangladesh.

II. PIDHA DEULS :

Temple structures with stepped roofing or superstructure over the sanctum in general are known as Pidha deul which are akin to Kadamba chalukya temples in south India and Phansankara edifices of the Gujrata region. The Orissan trend however denotes mandapa in front of the main Prasada called Jagmohan or rarely smaller individual shrines with such superstructure. In Bengal, the roofing pattern was apparently adopted for the individual shrines in the districts of Midnapore and Bankura with slight variation in the roof end section, slope of the roof, appearance of the tower and depth as well as width of the grooves. The representative monuments falling in this category as already mentioned hereinbefore include Shyamaleswar temple of Dantan and Siva temple of Kangreshwar at Garbeta in the district of Midnapore. Besides this, the tall pyramidal temple at Belatukri (Onda-Bankura) falls in this category. Certain other examples in this category are also available in the districts of Midnapore without terracotta alignments and though considered not much relevant for architectural merits, are mentioned hereunder.

1. Keshiari, Midnapore-Sarbamangala Temple. The main sanctum as well as the Jagmohana, both constructed in Pidha style.
2. Sekua, Kharagpur, Midnapore, Chandaneswar Siva Temple. The main sanctum, Antarala and Jagmohana are roofed in Pidha style.

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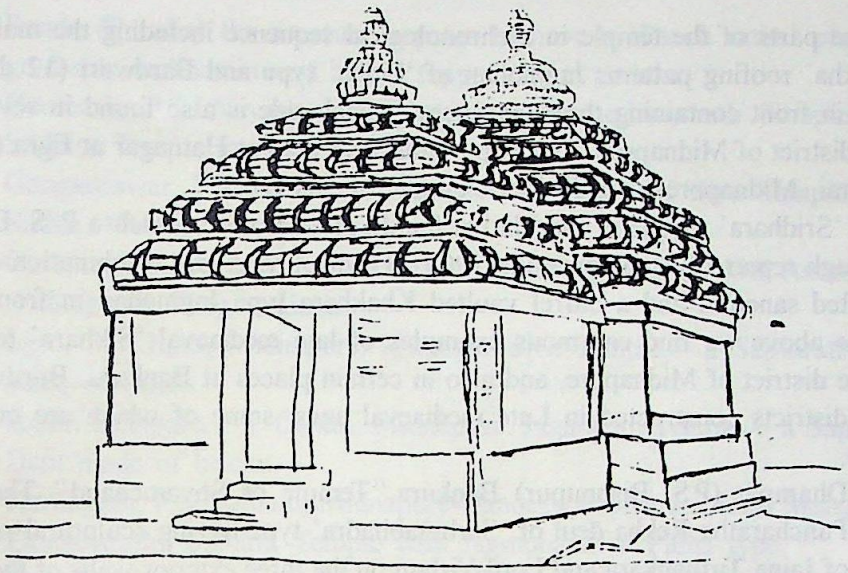

Ideal Pidha type-Chandaneswar Siva-Sankoa (Kharagpur) Midnapore.

Rekha deuls with porches—

The Rekha deuls with variations in the roofing patterns of the Jagmohana in front found at several places, have already been discussd earlier while dealing with the aspects of evolution of architecture. However some of such temples as references for recording this distinguishing pattern are mentioned as under.

b. The 'Saptaratha' Sitaram Deul of Balarampur (Debra) Midnapore, (1860-61 AD). The main sanctum is Sikhara roofed and the Jagmohana roof is constructed in the 'Chala' pattern with carved ridging.

c. The 'Bargabhima' temple of Tamluk, Midnapore, Saptaratha. Main sanctum roof represents modified Sikhara type and the adjoining 'Jagmohana' roof is of 'Charchala' type. The same features are also evident in the 'Jishnuhari' temple of Tamluk having some terracotta decorations apparently built in the early eighteenth century AD and Shyamsundur Jiu temple at Paikpari— PS. Bhagawanpur, Dt. Midnapore (1730AD).

d. The Dandeswar temple at Karnagarh (Salbani, Midnapore)— Ekadash Ratha Sikhara and its adjoining Jagmohana has been featuring 'Pidha' (Bhadra) typical roof (Saptaratha)— (app 17th century). The 'Mahamaya' temple nearby is comparatively a small structure but represents the same style. The main sanctum is 'Saptaratha' sikhara and the Jagmohana is also Saptaratha— Pidha roofed. The Pancharatha Rekha deul of Raghunathjiu at Ayodhya in Chandrakona (Ghatal sub division, Midnapore) is yet another example of this type of temple— which is accompanied by 'Pidha' roofted Jagmohana in front. The temple is significant for its prominent architectural features in keeping with Orissan trends.

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e. Three parts of the temple in a chronological sequence including the main sanctum of 'Rekha' roofing pattern, Jagmohan of 'Pidha' type and Bardwari (12 doors) dancing hall in front containing three entrances in each side is also found in several places in the district of Midnapore. The Saptaratha Siva deul at Hatnagar at Egra (sub division– Contai, Midnapore) is a distinct example of this type.

f. The 'Sridhara' temple of the Bhuiya family at Dhamtore— Debra P. S. Dt. Midnapore (though reportedly constructed in 1909 AD) displays a rare combination of a 'Sikhara' roofted sanctum and a barrel vaulted Khakhara type Jagmohan in front.

Besides the above we find enormous examples of late mediaeval 'Sikhara' temples spread throughout the district of Midnapore, and also in certain places at Bankura, Burdwan, Birbhum and Howrah districts constructed in Late mediaeval ages, some of which are cited hereunder for reference.

1. Dharapat (P.S. Bishnupur) Bankura."Temple of Shyamchand" The temple is a Pancharatha Rekha deul of 'Sarbotabhadra' type having sculptural representations of Jaina Tirthankara and Lord Vishnu on the three exterior walls of the temple. This is an important monument in the context of the religious affiliation or syncretisation.
2. Elati, Belatikuri (Bankura). "Twin deuls" The deuls are stated to be bearing the architectural influences of Bodhgaya and also appear to be extended forms of Rekha/Pidha deuls of Orissa.
3. Sri Sri Shyamchand Temple at Hazrapara, Bishnupur and Deul at Bikrampore, Onda, Dt. Bankura. The temples are constructed of Laterite and of the Rekha type with appearance of Jagmohan.
4. Muninagar, P.S Bishnupur. Bankura— Sri Sri Radhakanta jiu Temple— Rekha temple with annexation of the Antarala and Jagmohan as per Orissa architectural patterns.
5. Sihar, P.S. Kotulpur, Bankura-Mahadeva Siva Temple— Rekha deul annexed by Jagmohan.
6. Khutgeria, P.S. Barjora, Bankura— Rekha Deul apparently with the elements of Vaishnava cult.
7. Bishnupur, Bankura— Two large sized Rekha Deuls within the fort area of Bishnupur royalty in the southern direction of the Mrinmayi Devi Temple— the official deity of the Bishnupur Raj. The temples were once profusely ornamented with terracotta decorations.
8. Telkupi (Purulia) the temples are having 'Pancha ratha' ground plan having closer affinities to the early form of 'Nagara' temples of Orissa.
9. Barakar (Bardhaman). Four stone temples one of which is reported to be belonging to much earlier date. It consists of a sanctum, which is 'Tri ratha' in plan i.e. one projections on each face deviding the surface into three vertical sections i.e. Rathas.
10. Deulbhira (Taldangra, Bankura)— the sanctum also appears to have 'Triratha' plan apparently belonging to the group.

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11. Banda (Purulia) the sanctum appears to have a 'Panch ratha' plan. The Sikhar gradually inclines inward and is topped by an amlaka.
12. Deulbarh, P.S. Nayagram, Midnapore— Rameshwarnath Temple, Pancharatha Sikhara Temple made of Laterite.
13. Ganganeswar, P.S. Keshiari, Midnapore Gaganeswar Siva Temple– Pancharatha Sikhara Temple made of Laterite.
14. Garbeta, P.S. Garbeta, Midnapore— Sarbamangala Deul with Antarala, Jagmohan (Pidha) and Bhogmandapa.
15. Egra, P.S. Egra, Midnapore. Hatnagar Siva Temple— a Saptaratha Rekha Deul made of bricks.
16. Bahiri Deulbarh P.S. Contai, Midnapore. Jagannath Temple— a Saptaratha Rekha Deul made of bricks.
17. Karnagarh, P.S. Salbani, Midnapore-Dandeswar Siva and Devi Mahamaya Temple, Ekadasaratha Sikhara Temple with Jagmohana of Pidha type.
18. Bengda, Narayangarh, Midnapore— Raghunatha Temple as Pancharatha Sikhara with Jagmohan of Charachala type.
19. Panchrole, Egra, Midnapore. Radhavinod Temple— Saptaratha Sikhara Temple erected on the first storey of a Dalan structure accompanied by Jagmohan and Natmandapa.

III. BANGLA OR CHALA TYPE :

The true indigenous form of 'Chala'— which denotes covers of thatched huts in rural Bengal was perceived by the artisans of Bengal while cognizing and implementing the architectural layout of temple— which was more a center of passion than a superstructure itself. As alreadey discussed, the Bengali architects had spiritual and devotional attachment to the place of worship and they had the inclination to find their beloved master staying nearer or closer to their habitation in a place which is shaped or formed in a habitual manner. The traditional Bengali huts are covered by sloppy or pent roofs of paddy straws intensively arranged and distributed in separate frames over the mud walls so as prevent the adversities of monsoon swept climatic conditions of the soil, and to create a conductive atmosphere of a comfortable living, which emerged as a tradition is this territory from time unknown. The separate frames, the lower parts of which were greater than the upper parts were either triangular or four armed, and were known as chalas— which varied in number in keeping with size and design of the huts. When the structure rises more than one storey, separate chalas for each storey in different numbers were used— thereby increasing the numbers of chalas also. The form has been adopted in late mediaeval temples both as functional or non functional decorative elements.

Despite this form exclusively belonging to the soils of Bengal, it is worthwhile mentioning that the same bears some affinity of the 'Sala' Vimana temple architecture of South India which in

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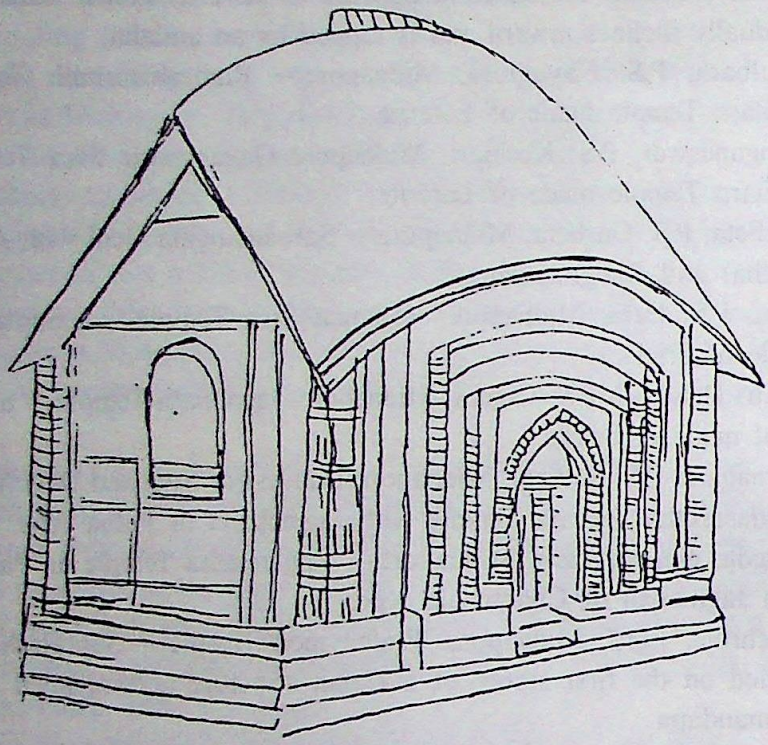

Simple Ek Bangla type- Sether Bangla Handial Pabna

certain specific cases have inverted boat like roof on the ridge of an elipsoidal body structure. The tired arrangement of sloppy roof frames suited to a region of high rainfall was adopted in different forms elsewhere in India and the Chala form is a local version of the basic architectural needs demanding durability of the edifices in the given climatic condition.

Details of the several types of Chala temples constructed in the Late mediaeval Bengal have been recorded by eminent scholars. We have come across innumerable temples of this category in different parts of Bengal, particularly in Bangladesh revealing exquisite beauty of structure as well as decorative elements. The discusstion of the form in keeping with classification norms in this regard is apparently relevant for a better comprehension and appraisal of the ideas about circumstances leading to such intensive temple building activity— elaborated elsewhere in this work.

A) Do Chala

This particular variety in particular bears an inverted boat like form in so far as the 'Chalas' have been shaped in a curvilinear form meeting both the ends in a single line rendering the upper portion bending like a bow. This is not a very common form and the same was cultivated particularly in the Eastern Bengal districts of Jessore and others in the same territory. The traces

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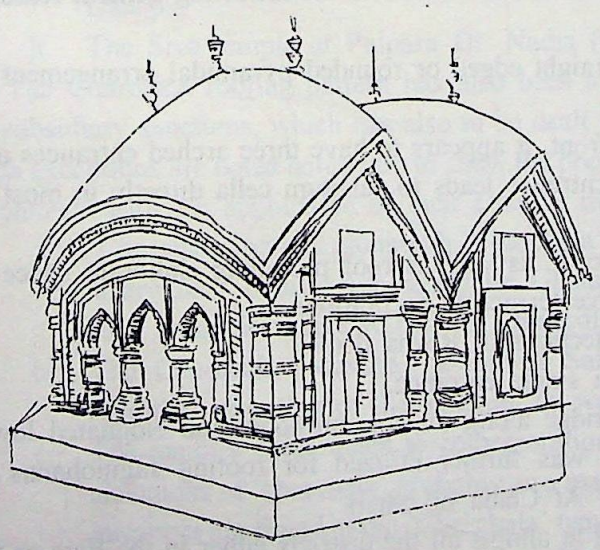
of such form are also availble in the districts of Murshidabad and Midnapore. The Charbangla temples built up by Rani Bhavani at Barnagar (near Ajimganj) Dt. Murshidabad in 1760 A.D. signify a specific standard of this category. This is a cluster of four dochalas temples on separate basements— two of which bear terracotta decoration on three sides including the facade. The rest two are are mostly plain. The Gopalbari temple at Naldanga, Kaliganj— in the district of Jessore (1644 AD) is an excellent representation of this type in so far as its elegant architectural view is concerned. The Kalurai's Dochala temple at Rampur (Daspur) in the district of Midnapore is also very matured execution of the architectural from, nevertheless it is a plain edifice without terracotta decoration (approximately 19th Century AD). The other significant temples gracefully ornamented and falling in the category are as under :

1. Siva temples at Madhabpasa— Dt. Barishal— Bangladesh— 17th century AD.
2. The Narayana temple at Kaichal, Bhanga, Dt. Faridpur— Bangladesh— 18th century.
3. The Sitala Bangla temple at Nandial, Taras, Dt. Pabna, Bangladesh— 1779 AD.
4. The Siva temple at Puthia (in a cluster of three temples, the other two being Char chala temples), Dt. Rajshahi, Bangladesh— 1779 AD.

Many other temples falling in this category are also existent in the district of Faridpur, Pabna, Rangpur, Mymensingh in Bangladesh indicating greater acceptability of this category in the said territory.

B) Jora Bangla

The form shows like two parallel inverted boat like roofs side by side sometimes raising in between a tower as a crowning element. The polygonal, hexagonal or octagonal tower as crowning element took the shape of 'Charchala' or 'Atchala' or 'Ratna' elevations. All the elements have been placed in an integrated manner exposing a graceful look. The temples are generally approached by a porch— which have three arched entrances in front and the sanctum cella posseses a single entrance in its front. Each of such roofs has three finials. A good number of such temples were constructed in the district of Jessore, neverthless the true excellent representation of this category is Kesta Rai's Jora Bangla Temple at Bishnupur (1655AD) Dt. Bankura—which has emerged as a climax not only of this category of architectural monument but also as a monument of highest architectural and



Simple Jora Bangla type — RadhaKrishna Temple— Birnagar Nadia

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sculptural merit in the late mediaeval Bengal. While the decorative aspect are being dealt with separately, we find certain other representative specimens of this type in the district of Jessore and on sporadic basis in other districts—

1. The Lohagara temple of Majumdar family at Lakshmipur, in the district of Jessore (app- early 18th century)
2. The Gopinath temple of Dhulgram, Abhaynagar in Jessore District. (1749 AD)
3. The Krishna Balaram temple at Kanai nagar, Mahammadpur, Dt. Jessore (1703 AD)
4. The Narayana temple at Raigram, Lohagara in the district of Jessore (early 18th century)
5. The Gopinath— Radhagobinda temple at Pabna (1607 AD) in the district of Pabna itself.
6. The Siva temple at Maheshwarpasa in the district of Khulna (early 18th century).
7. The Varaha Vishnu temple at Kaigram, Manteshwar Dt. Burdwan (early 18th century).
8. The Radhakrishna temple at Birnagar, Dt. Nadia (1694AD).
9. The Gangeswar temple at Barnagar, Ajimganj in the district of Murshidabad (app. 1755 AD)
10. The Krishna Roy temple at Tehatta Dt. Nadia (1678 AD).

There is yet another category of shrine, though uncommon, revealing an integrated form of raising a 'Do Chala' between two charchala shrines. The three Siva temples of Char Ana Estate at Puthia Dt. Rajshahi (1823 AD) is a specimen of this uncommon form. David Mccutchion cited yet another temple of this category raised on lower flat roofed set of shrines at 'Rajrani' temple— Khalia, Dt. Faridpur, Bangladesh (18th century)— which we do not find elsewhere in Bengal.

C) Charchala

The Charachala combination in the temple architecture shows the following general features :

1. Charchala single unit shrines of straight edged or rounded pyramidal arrangement of chalas.
2. When accompanied by a porch in front, it appears to have three arched entrances and side chambers, otherwise a single entrance leads to sanctum cella directly in most of the cases.
3. Tall charchalas with heightened facade as well as roof providing elaborate space in front— occupies mostly by intensive terracotta decorations.
4. Charchala temples with Ratha projections of Rekha deuls.
5. Charchalas on elognated base with single entrance.

Occasionally a Char Chala roof with a ridge along the top surmounts an elognated lower structure. This elognated Char Chala form was further utilized for roofing Jagmohanas or Natamandapas of other forms of temple i.e. At Chala or others.

This particular form has been widely used in almost all the districts either in the East or the West Bengal. Besides common small unit shrines, large Char Chala shrines profusely ornamented with terracotta sculptures are also found on sporadic basis.

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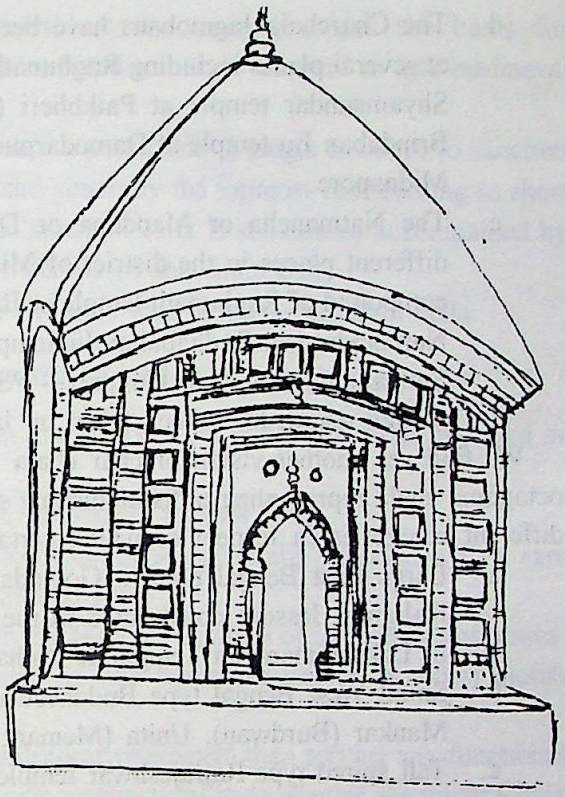
Some of the significant Char Chala edifices representing the catagory of architecture are mentioned hereinafter as reference.

a. Small single unit Charchala Siva temple at Ghurisa at Ilambazar, Dt. Birbhum (constructed in 1633 AD).
b. The Raghaveswar temple at Dignagar, Dt. Nadia (1669 AD)
c. The Madan Mohan temple at Satrajitpur, Magura Dt. Jessore (1683 AD).
d. The cluster of Four Siva temples at Uchcha Karan, Nanur—Birbhum— (1769 AD)
e. The Siva temple (large char chala) at Puthia in the district of Rajshahi (18th century AD).
f. The Jaleswar temple at Shantipur, Dt. Nadia (early 18th Century AD).
g. The Kali temple at Bhikahar (with Do chala porch) at Tapan, West Dinajpur



Simple Charchala type- Raghunathjiu Temple-Ghurisa Birbhum.

h. The Siva temple at Palpara Dt. Nadia (on elognated base) (17th century AD).

The Charchala roofing pattern has also been adopted in certain other architectural edifices or subsidiary sanctums, which has also to be dealt with separately afterwards. Neverthless some such executions are noted hereunder to show the popularity of such forms practised by the Bengali Architects with the application of their creative minds.

a. 'Charchala' temple alongwith 'Charchala' Jagmohan in front : 'Simhabahini' temple at 'Karmakar' family, Konnagarpally, Ghatal in the district of Midnapore— 19th Century AD. (Non figurative terracotta reportedly existed earlier now removed).
b. The Charchala 'Manasa' temple at Saipara, Ajuria (Daspur), Midnapore bears a 'triratha' elevation of the sanctum as well roof (app. 18th century AD).
c. The temples constructed in comemoration of pious Vaishnava Mohantas bear distinct elevations of 'charchala' probably as a matter of convention within the community. Such instances are found at the 'Charchala' temple of Giridharilal Goswami at Dihibaliharpur (Daspur), Gopiballavpur 'Vaishnava Math', and at Mahaprabhu bari at Tamluk, Dt. Midnapore etc.

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d. The Charchala Jagmohans have been placed as adjuncts in front of 'Sikhara' temple at several places including Raghunath Mandir at Bengda (Narayangarh) (19th century), Shyamsundar temple at Paikbheri (Bera family), PS-Bhagawanpur (1730 AD) and Brindaban Jiu temple at Damodarpur, Ps. Dantan (Mid 18th century), in the district of Midnapore.

e. The Natmancha or Mandapa or Dolmancha have been elevated as 'Charchala' at different places in the district of Midnapore. The Dolmancha and Natmandapa in the compound of Raghunath temple at Bana patna, PS. Kharagpur (Late 18th century), the Natmandir near Radhaballav Jiu temple at Khandarui, Dantan PS, and Natmandapa near Simhabahini temple at Paikpari— PS. Debra, etc are examples of this type. The details in this regard have been taken up later in this chapter.

We find yet another vision of char chala roofing on octagonal temples, which are seen as octagonal chala representing a distinguishing style. Maccutchion has classified this type in three different categories in respect of which certain examples are cited hereunder.

a. Large East Bengal type. i. Govinda, Siva and Taranath Siva Temples at Naldanga, Kaligunj, Jessore constructed in the 18th-19th centures AD.
   ii. Lakshminarayan Temple at Muhammadpur, Jessore, Constructed in 1704 AD.

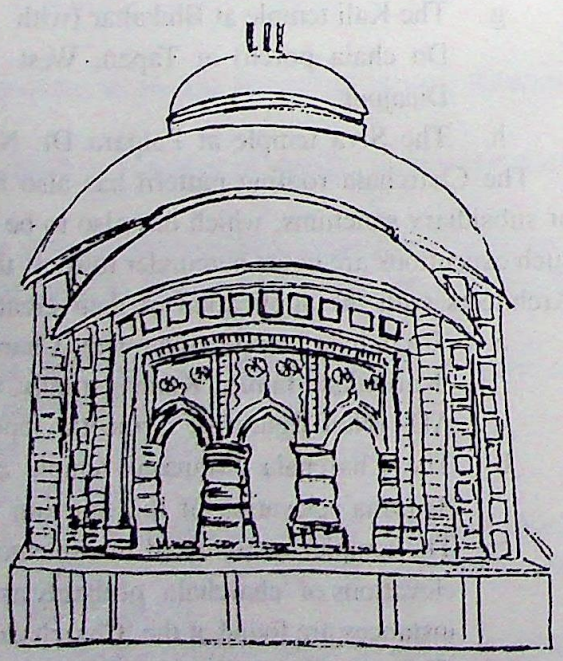
b. Small West Bengal type Buddheswara Temple at Eral, Ausgram Burdwan, others at Mankar (Burdwan), Unita (Memari, Burdwan) and Hetampur (Birbhum) etc.

c. Tall spired type-Rajrajeshwar temple at Sib Nivas, Krishnagar, Nadia.

D) At Chala

Among all forms of shrine elevation. 'Atchala' gained the highest acceptability in so far as the number of late mediaeval Bengal temples under this category is concerned. It was in fact putting two tiers of charchala as a roofing arrangement— the higher one being smaller than the lower one. The same form is also derived from the local 'Atchala' thatched cottages in the rural Bengal— the overall view of which has been reproduced in the pucca construction with suitable changes and modifications on architectural merits.

The diversity of such mode of construction had wide range. There are larger as well as smaller temples with variations in the degree of slope of the chalas and construction of bases. David Maccutchion's classification in



Atchala Temple with a porch— Radhagobindaji Temple-Atpur Hooghly

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this regard is too minute and meticulous, neverthless the same provides the basis for furtherance of discussions for appreciation of this architectural style adopted in late mediaeval Bengal.

1. Larger temples— having triple entrance onto a porch and a single entrance to sanctum cella. The temples have elognated bases and generally the topmost roof coming to short ridge with three finials. In the interior the sanctum cella is sometimes accompanied by side chambers for accommodating other deities of the same cult.
2. Small single unit shrine having a single entrance onto a single sanctum cella.

The development of the style has been segmented as under–

I. The 18th century— Hooghly— Burdwan group. The roof edges are either rounded or straight.

The salient features in common may be briefed as follows:

II. The 19th century— Midnapore group. Roof edges are generally rounded with a rare exception of raising straight almost pyramidal roof.

a. The Hooghly group is decorated profusely by figurative panels of terracotta sculptures.

b. The Burdwan group is generally decorated by non figurative vegetal or floral motifs of terracotta designs.

c. The upper chala turned out to be merely a decorative element than serving any functional purpose. This trend emerged from Bishnupur architectural style wherein the upper Chala is so short that the same is hardly distinguishable from Char Chala. The trend however being called as Bishnupur type, was spread in the districts of Bankura, Burdwan and North Midnapore.

d. There was a practice of creation of height either by lengthning the facade or the chala or both— for providing greater space to accommodate decorative elements. This was however adopted in the district of Jessore, Bangladesh.

e. In certain cases low towered (Chala) structured temples were constructed on a square base with the tower coming to a point.It was initially quite large having three entrances onto a porch and a single entrance onto the sanctum cella. When such temples are smaller, they were built disporportionately high. In Burdwan district they developed a hunched appearance. Large elognated At Chala temples may also have the type of low upper tower.

f. At Chala temples with Ratha projections of the sanctum like 'sikhara' architectural form was also constructed in certain places in the district of Midnapore and Hooghly.

g. Temples while possessing a very tiny but fully developed tower (chala), were constructed in the district of Birbhum— for which the same is called 'Birbhum type'. The upper tower (chala) turned basically a large char chala design and such tendency is also evident in various 19th century temples.

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Some of the representative temples of this category may be mentioned as under.

District of Nadia
(Standard)

Shamchand Temple— Shamchandpara (Santipur)— 1726 AD
Madhaveswar Temple— Kansaripara (Santipur)— 1863 AD
Jadaveshwar Temple— do 1863 AD
Adwaitaprabhu and Gokulchand Temples - Hatkholapara, Santipur— 1740 AD

District of Jessore
(Mostly Atchala with triple archway)

Rameshwari Temple— Naldanga— 1798 AD
Siva Temple — Murali — 1792 AD
Ganganath Siva Temple—Telkupi— 1740AD
Shyam Rai Temple— Chanchra—1696 AD

District of Howrah
(Standard)

Gajalakshmi Temple-Amaragari— 1729 AD
Dadhimadhava Temple Amaragari—1764 AD
Khatteswara Siva Temple— Khalna—1783AD
Sitaramjiu Temple at Ghoshpara, Shyamsundar Jiu temple at Madhyapara,
Sitanath Temple at Kararpara- Jhikhira Late 18th Cent AD.

District of Hooghly
(Standard)

Radhagobindajiu Temple-Sripat Atpur —1786 AD
Five Siva temples with Malaichand Temple at Center— Bhagabatipur Chanditala, Late 18th Cent AD.
Dwarika Chandi Temple— Dwarhatta, Haripal —1686 AD
Raj Rajeshwar Temple— do early 18th Cent AD.
Damodara, Sitarama and Radhakanta Temples— Rajbalhat, Jangipara —1723, 37, & 33 AD

District of Burdwan
(Standard)

Ananta Vasudeva Temple— Ambika Kalna— 1754 AD
Gopinathjiu Temple— Dogachia, Purbasthali—1654 AD
Sridharjiu Temple— Hatgobindapur— 17th Cent AD
Lakshmi Narayan Temple— Mulgram, Memari, 1692 AD
Radhakanta Temple— Jaugram, Jamalpur 17th Cent AD
Sridhara Temple—Sridharpur, Memari, —18th Cent AD.
Raj Rajeshwara Temple— Suhari, Burdwan—18th Cent. AD.
Astamatrika Durga Temple— Hatgobindapur —18th Cent. AD
Gopala Temple— Mandalaya, Pandua 1758 AD.

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District of Midnapore (Standard-Midnapore type)

Radhagobindajiu Temple— Chaipat, Daspur— 1760 AD
Taraknath Siva Temple—Gobindapur, Panskura,-1881 AD
Gopinath Temple— Deulpota, Sutahata— 1743 AD
Sitalananda Siva Temple— Shyamsundar—
—Patna, West Panskura— 1847 AD
Ramjiu Temple— Rambagh, Mahishadal—1788 AD
Sitalananda Siva Temple— Bhawanipur, Chandrakona 19th Cent AD
Khargeswar and Sitalananda Siva Temples, Khirpai, Chandrakona
—1851 & 1839 AD.
Dakshina Kali Temple, Malancha, Kharagpur— 1712 AD
Sridharjiu Temple— Brahmanabasan, Daspur 18th Cent AD
Sitalananda Siva Temple— Harirampore, Daspur, 19th Cent AD.

We may further observe the undernoted characteristic variations—

I) Small Atchalas with single entrance onto to the sanctum cella decorated with terracotta sculptures also bear the architectural type as well as variations as found in larger or standard types. Such examples are scattered at several places and the period of construction is also spread over from the earlier 'Hooghly-Burdwan' category of 18th century to the Midnapore category of late 19th Century AD. Mccutchion also classified the type into separate categories like that with heightend facade (Sankari— Burdwan and Lavpur— Birbhum), with elognated tower (Khalia— Faridpur and Chaigharia— Khulna), with heightened facade and tower (Dohazari— Khulna and Murah— Jessore), with Ratha projection (Satyapur, Gopalnagar in Midnapore, Malaypur and Goghat in Hooghly) and also with that of Girigobardhana type at Rajagram, Jaypur Dt. Bankura (The upper portion of the Chala has been designed in the shape of an ice berg).

II) The Bishnupur variety with low towered Atchala, as pointed out by D. Maccutchion does not have much relevance in so far as the terracotta ornamentation is concerned. Neverthless in the later part of 19th century, a few specimens belonging to this category have been built where moderate terracotta decorations are available, such as Bakadaha and Palit in Bankura, Bahadurpur in Burdwan and Surul in Birbhum.

However the single entrance Burdwan variety of temples belonging to a later period shows terracotta ornamentation— like that of Buro Siva temple at Palasi— Burdwan (1782 AD) and Lakshmi Janardan temple at Arohanpur— Midnapore (18th century).

III) The Birbhum type of tiny towered temples are not found to be decorated with terracotta plaques or designs, hence not much relevant for discussion in the present context.

There is yet another distinguishing variety of duplicated chala on Octagonal temples which are treated as equivalent of At chala found in the district of Burdwan in particular, some of which are worth mentioning.

a. Siva Temple of Mukherjee family at Ramchandrapur (Bhatar, Burdwan) constructed in nineteenth century.
b. Two Siva Temples at Panchra (Jamalpur, Burdwan) also believed to be constructed in the nineteenth century AD.

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c. Other temples which are largely plain are available at Mankar (Burdwan), Masagram (Jamalpur, Burdwan), Amadpur and Jabuli (Memari, Burdwan) and Nasigram (Bhatar, Burdwan).

E) Baro Chala

Though uncommon, efforts have been made by the Bengali Architects to bring variations of form by placing yet another tier of roof over the 'Atchala' form— thereby making it look like twelve chalas. This was mostly non functional or decorative element and was not a popular form, in so far as the number of such edifices are concerned. Neverthless the trend prevailing was mostly bearing the characteristics of Atchala temples with

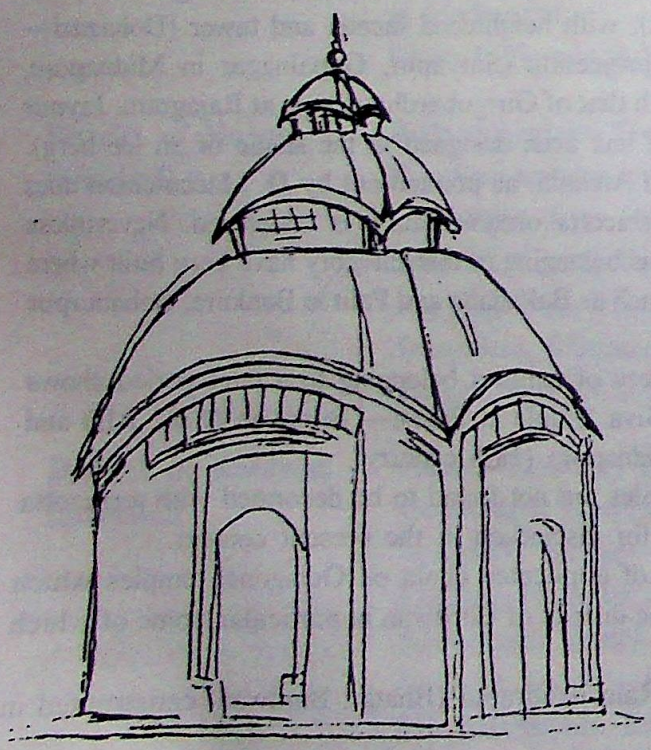
I) A little space (low) between the roof sections.

II) High towerd 'Baro chala' with Ratha projections.

The Siva temple of Illchhoba (Pandua) Dt. Hooghly represents the first order which is comparatively older than the second order.

The second type of temple in this category was represented by the 'Barochala' Sive temple of Ghosh family at Paschimpara— Deulpur (Panchla) in the district of Howrah, the Jaleswar Siva temple at Jalasbar (Ghatal) and the Rameshwar Siva temple at Natuk Jaikrishnapur (Ghatal) in Midnapore district.

Several other dimensions of Chala form have also been conceived by the Bengal Architects— which are primarily experimental and did not gain much popularity. Maccutchion has separately distinguished the multiple corniced type of such elevations in which the carve of the cornice was repeated in different segments upto the roof or cornices all way upto a spire. The specimens under the category are generally available in the East Bengal.



Simple Barochala Shrine-Deulpur, Howrah

IV. RATNA TEMPLES—

The variety gained much popularity in both eastern and western parts of Bengal and the edifices of this kind are apparently the synthesis of tradition as well as all incoming trends, exposing thereby a new look to the shrine elevation accepted as a specific standard of the architectural tradition in Bengal. The form entails installation of miniature shrines in the central portion on the roof— either of the Rekha or of the Chala

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variety as decorative or ornamental purposes— which was further be clustered by smaller turrets on the edge of the shrine roofs with intervening spaces.

A wide range variety of shapes and proportions of turrets with or without curvilinear cornices has been evident in the architectural layout and the roofing arrangement of the turrets i.e. ridged or pyramidal or smooth etc, exhibiting thereby the divergence of the creative minds of the architects.

While the pattern has its origin in North Indian as well as South Indian forms of massive temple architecture with regard to clustering of Sikhara by turrets, the drastic modification by the Bengali architects suiting their own limitations are worth mentioning. The Pratihara temple architecture represented by Mahadevi temple of Gyaraspur, Dt. Bidisha has a sanctum— which is triratha in plan with a pancharatha sikhara of nine turrets. In Rajasthan, the Ambika Mata Temple at Jagat, Dt. Udaipur, the pancharatha sanctum appears to possess a sikhara of seventeen turrets on roof which is pyramidal and composed of dimensional tiers. The Vaishnava temple called 'Sas Bahu' at Nagda, Dt. Udaipur which possesses a sikhara made of brick showing a cluster of minor turrets. The affinity of such type of temple architecture with south Indian type 'Hara' or 'Anarpita Hara' is glaring. The Southern specimens of this kind shows 'Vimana' tala or storey with intervening spaces.

The inflow of the Islamic architectural trends in the mediaeval Bengal particularly in regard to 'Manaras' forming part of buildings either as buttresses or as decorative adjuncts or serving both purposes together— has been found to be activated within the architectural ideas to construction of this category of temple. The Manaras are analogous to turrets which according to their placements within the building are known as

a. Gateway turrets.
b. The front corner turret.
c. The Rear Corner turret.
d. The corner turret.
e. Pinnacle turret.

Such placement of the turrets as integrated objects of the roofing arrangements with the background of the traditional north Indian or south Indian traits alongwith the achievements of the local traditions resulted to conceptualization of the forms of the 'Ratna' temples— which attained much popularity in the late mediaeval Bengal. The architects of Bengal have domonstrated their innovative skills in giving the set of ideas a definite or distinct direction with a clear identity.

In keeping with the number of miniature shrine forms of turrets on the roofs including the larger one at the center the temples have been identified as 'Ek (one) Ratna', 'Pancha (five) Ratna', Nava (nine) Ratna', 'Trayodas (thirteen) Ratna', 'Saptadas (seventeen) Ratna', 'Ek Bingsha (twenty one) Ratna', 'Pancha Bingshati (twenty five) Ratnas'.

The basic form or elevation of Ratna temples did also bear some characteristic variations or redistribution or rearrangement of architectural members in keeping with the cost of construction or merits of architecture. Such variations have been committed keeping however the ovarall feature of 'Ratna' edifices unaffected.

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1. The height of the turrets have been changed at the discretion of the architects and placement of such turrets besides the central one was modified suitably depending upon the ovarall design. The broad classification of such turrets is as under.
   a. 'Char Chala' turrets.
   b. Ridged Rekha turrets.
   c. Smooth Rekha turrets.
   d. Octagonal turrets.
2. The Rekha turrets have sometimes taken the stunted pyramidal shape, as evident a few temple.
3. Even though a major portion of such temples are sanctums, there are several instances of larger edifices of this kind having porch triple archway.
4. Occassionally there had been two storeys or three storeys of such 'Ratna'edifices. The central upper storey turrets are sometimes made functional or sometimes ornamental. In case of functional storeys, staircases were constructed from inside for going up to the upper storey. The upper storey turrets in such cases were constructed slightly larger than the non functional or ornamental storeys.
5. We find a very clear cut classification of straight cornices or curved cornices dominating the design of the temples of 'Ratna' group.
6. The central tower becomes larger and occasionally of different nature compared to the cluster of other towers on the roof. For example the central tower may become octagonal against pure char chala turrets surrounding and this is more particularly evident in the district of Bankura and Burdwan.
7. As a reference to the reprersentative edifices falling in the different categories of 'Ratna' temples, the following example are cited merely to substantiate the characteristic trends of this particular popular design prevaling in late mediaeval Bengal. In West Bengal most of the 'Ratna' temples are characterized by installation of miniature Rekha turrets ornamented as 'Ratnas'. However the trend is somewhat different in so far as such 'Ratnas' have taken the shape of Atchala turrets as decorative objects in East Bengal.
8. The Rekha turrets are further characterized by straight cornices and carved cornices with or without porch, as architecftural design. The variations are evident in the districts of Midnapore and Burdwan in West Bengal.

Though the detailed list of districtwise terracotta decorated temples is being annexed to the text of the book interalia mentioning the styles in the broad terms, a few of such temples falling in the different segments of the Ratna category are quoted hereunder in support of the above varsions.

A) Ek Ratna—

i) Char Chala Turrets— Radha Vallava, Temple, Krishnanagar, Hooghly, Khanakul— 18th Cent AD.

ii) Ridged Rekha Turrets— Gopinath Temple, Daspur, Midnapore— 1716 AD.

iii) Smooth Rekha Turrets— Madan Mohan Temple, Bishnupur— 1694AD.

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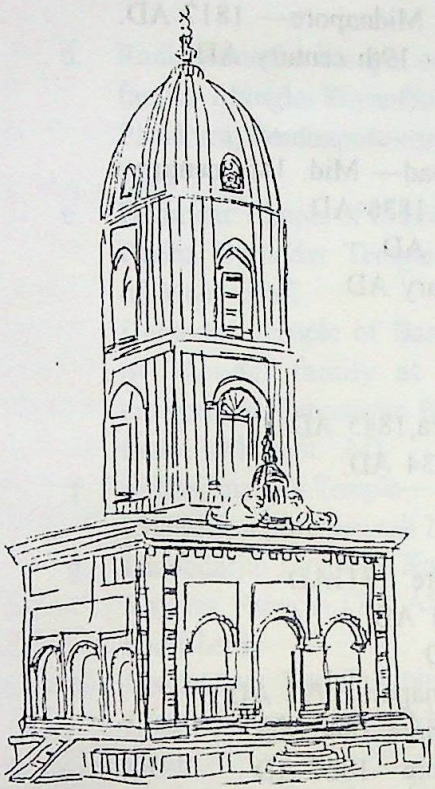

Tall slendar Rekha-towered Ek ratna Temple- Chilkigarh Midnapore.

iv) Octagonal Turrets—

a. Sivamandir— Dwadasbari, Bishnupur Bankura— 17th century AD

b. Ananta Vasudeva Temple— Bansberia, Hooghly— 1679AD

c. Ramchandra Temple— Gupti para, Hooghly— 17th Century AD

d. Braja Raja Kishore Temple— Baliharpur, Daspur, Midnapore— 18th century AD.

e. Panchananda Temple— Radhakantapur, Daspur, Midnapore— 18th century AD.

f. Madan Mohan Temple— Baikunthapur, Daspur, Midnapore— 18th century AD.

B) Pancha Ratna—

Char chala Turrets—

a. Govinda Temple— Puthia (Rajshahi) 18th Century AD.

b. Mahadeva Temple— Naldanga (Jessore)— 17th century AD.(Central tower— Octagonal)

Ridged Rekha—

Group-I (Ridged pyramidal Sikhara— Curvilinear)

a. Shyam Roy Temple—Bishnupur—Bankura— 1613 AD.

b. Radhakanta Temple— Akui, Indus, Bankura— 1764 AD.

c. Gopinath temple at Loada, Debra, Midnapore— 1805 AD.

d. Gopinath Temple— Dasghara, Dhaniakhali, Hooghly- 1729AD

e. Gopinath Temple— Swoaluk, Parsura— Hooghly— 18th Cen. AD.

Group II (Ridged Rekha with shallower Ratha and close Ridging)

a. Radhagobinda Temple— Sadipur (Burdwan)— 18th century AD.

b. Lakshmi Janardana Temple— Surul— Birbhum— 18th century AD.

Pancharatna-with chandni base-Sridharjiu Temple. Iswarpur Ghatal Midnapore.

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c. Radha Damodar Temple— Khirpai— Chandrakona— Midnapore— 1817 AD.
d. Lakshmi Janardana Temple— Ilambazar— Birbhum— 19th century AD.

Group III (Ridged Rekha, single entrance)
a. Ratneswar Temple, Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murshidabad— Mid. 18th century.
b. Bholanath Siva Temple— Sribati, Katwa, Burdwan— 1836 AD.
c. Siva Temple—Dihibatpur— Parsura, Hooghly— 1756 AD.
d. Siva Temple— Hatgovindapur, Burdwan— 18th Century AD

Smooth Rekha—
Group-I— Turrets with straight cornices
a. Radha Damodara Temple— Maynapur, Jaipur, Bankura,1845 AD
b. Jhareswar Temple—Kanasol, Keshpur, Midnapore, 1834 AD.

Group II— Turrets with carved cornices.
a. Janaki Ballav Temple— Tilantapara, Sabang, Midnapore. 1811AD
b. Lakshmi Janardan Temple— Daspur, Midnapore, 1791 AD
c. Dadhi Bamana Temple—Daspur, Midnapore, 1846 AD
d. Radhagovinda Temple— Dihibaliharpur, Daspur, Midanapore 1798 AD.
e. Raghunatha Temple— Radhakantapur, Daspur, Midnapore 1846 AD
f. Mahaprabhu Temple— Brindabanpur, Daspur, Midnapore—1827 AD.

Nava ratna with smooth turrets and carved cormices- Pathra

C) Nava Ratna

I. Char chala Turrets *(Curved)*
(either the topmost or the upper towers are Char chala)
a. Shyamsundara Temple— Sonabaria, Satkhira, Khulna 1767AD.
b. Abandoned Temples at.
i. Nanikshir, Faridpur, Gopalgunj 18th Cent AD.
ii. Hatikumrul, Pabna 18th Cent AD.
iii. Bardhankuthi, Rangpur— 17th cent AD.

II. Ridged Rekha *(Curved cornices)*
a. Lakshmi Varaha Temple of Maity family and Lakshmi Janardan Temple of Jana Family- Bagrui Keshpur,
Midnapore-early 19th Cent AD.
b. Raghunatha Temple— Alangiri, Egra. Midnapore-1810 AD.
c. Jagannatha Temple— Badar, Keshpur, Midnapore 19th Cent AD.

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d. Radhadamodar Temple of Maity family- Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore-early 19th Cent AD.

e. Damodar Temple of Chhota taraf, Radha Damodar Temple of Mejo taraf, Damodar Temple of Bara Taraf of Mondal family at Hadal-narayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura-early 19th cent. AD.

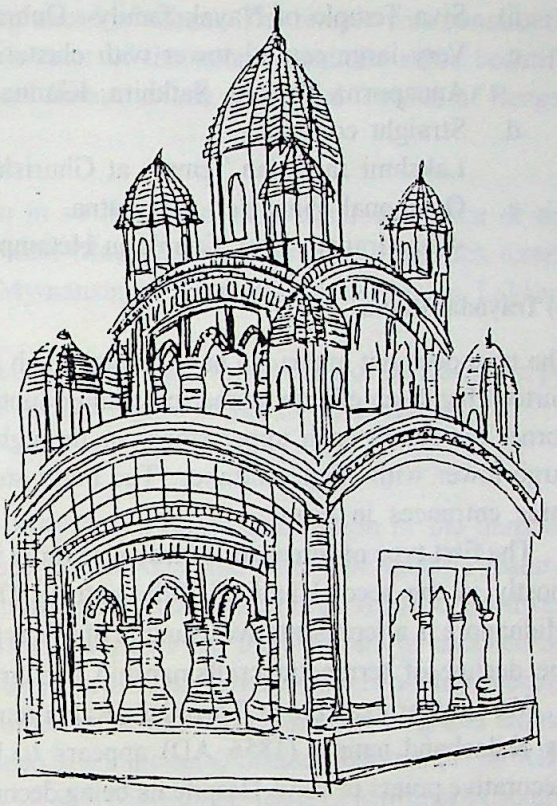
f. Sridharanathjiu Temple— Asanda, Udainrayanpur, Howrah 1789AD.

g. Damodarjiu Temple— Kalyanpur, Bagnan, Howrah 1786 AD. (since abolished).

h. Navaratna Temple-Gobindapur, Jagatballavpur, Howrah-Mid 18th Cent

i. Damodariju Temple— Gaja, West Udainarayanpur, Howrah 1788AD.

j. Sridhara Temple— Kayapat, Goghat, Hooghly 1807 AD



Standard Navaratna with Curved ridging of the turrets-Lakshmi Varaha Temple-Bagrui, Keshpur, Midnapore.

k. Sridhara Temple— Gopalpur, Burdwan- early 19th Cen AD.

l. Santinath Siva Temple, Mitrasenpur Chandrakona, Midnapore, 1828 AD.

m. Vrindabanchandra Temple— Konnagar, Ghatal, Midnapore 1794 AD.

n. Radhavinod Temple— Kenduli, Ilambazar, Birbhum Late 18th Cent AD.

o. Siva Temple— Baidyapur, Kalna, Burdwan— 1802 AD.

III. Smooth Rekha *(Carved cornices)*

a. Banka Rai Temple— Laoda, Daspur, Midnapore 1801 AD

b. Dadhibamana Temple— Harekrishnapur, Daspur, Midnapore 1854 AD

c. Navaratna Temple— Pathra, Midnapore-Mid 19th Cent AD.

d. Raghunatha Temple— Laskardighi, Panskura, Midnapore 1796 AD

IV. Others *(Exceptions).*

a. Flat Charchala Ratna Projection—
Kantaji Temple at Kantanager, Dinajpore— 1704-1722 AD

b. Absence of upper storey and simple clustering of turrets

i) Vishnu Temple at Serandi, Nanur, Birbhum, 19th Cent AD.

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ii) Siva Temple of Nayak family– Dubrajpur, 19th Cent AD.

c. Very large central tower with clustering of very small turrets around.
Annapurna Temple. Satkhira, Khulna- 19th Cent AD.

d. Straight corniced—
Lakshmi Janardan Temple at Ghurisha, Ilambazar, Birbhum early 19th Cent AD

e. Octagonal Pinnacled Navaratna
-Chandranath Siva Temple in Hetampur, Dubrajpur, Birbhum 1847 AD.

D) Trayodas Ratna—

The type does not appear to have gained much popularity. Increase in the number of turrets upto thirteen has been effected either by adding another storey within the usual layout of placing four corner turrets on each upper storey or through clustering of smaller turrets around the central large tower with single entrance. The multi storeyed edifices are commonly with a porch with three entrances in fornt.

The first type of three storied trayodas ratna is availble in the district of Midnapore constructed mostly in the second half of 19th century. The Sitarama temple at Kharar (PS. Ghatal) Dt. Midnapore is a representative example of this type with the crude stucco ornamentation evidencing the decline of terracotta craftsmanship and gradual replacement of the medium.

Yet another example of Trayodasa Ratna temple at Ramgarh (PS. Binpur), Midnapore known as Kalachand temple (1856 AD) appears to be significant from the architectural as well as decorative points of view. Despite its being decorated in terracotta— stucco mixed medium, which took place at the stage of decadence of the terracotta art, the aesthetic appeal of the profuse ornamentation does not escape the attention of the viewers.

The Siva temples at Hattala. Nandipukur, Ojhapara and Mudipara in Dubrajur, Dt. Birbhum represent the single storyed trayodasa Ratna temples with terracotta decorations, constructed between 1867 to 1874. The terracotta decorations here are not of distinctive quality and appear to be casual offshoots at the declining stage of an enriched heritage.

E) Saptadas Ratna—

We find such elevation in two different plans as pointed out by Maccutchion. We have only witnessed the Parvatinath Siva temple (constructed in 1908 AD) at Raghunathpur, Chandrakona Dt. Midnapore belonging to this category— where the upper storey was octagonal having such turrets on each corner and the two turrets being placed on each corner of the tower storey, thereby making the total number to go upto seventeen. The temple has been constructed at a much later date when terracotta as medium of ornamentation lost its intensive practices. However the temple is decorated with terracotta stucco mixed medium of insignificant quality.

Maccutchion also referred to the existence of such temple named Jagannath Temple near Comilla town in East Bengal— which is octagonal with spires and projecting chala huts constituting the Ratnas. The three storied temple is reported to have eight turrets on the first floor, eight turrets

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on the second floor with the central turret standing ahead of others. The temple was constructed in the year 1761 AD. Significantly enough, the interior of the temple contains some beautiful paintings on the wall— which is not a very common feature in late mediaeval temples of Bengal.

F) Eka Bingshati Ratna—

The form appears to be extremely uncommon in so far as no such standing edifice of this kind has been reportedly existed by now. Neverthless Maccutchion referred to one such temple having twenty one turrets at Krishorganj, Dt. Mymansingh, East Bengal known as Lakshmi Janardhan temple (18th Century).

A similar such temple was reported to be existed at Rajnagar in the district of Dacca as per various historical reference, but elaborate report in this regard is yet to be available.

G) Pancha Bingsati Ratna—

The number of turrets have been raised to twenty five through distribution of the numbers within three stories either for square or rectangular or octagonal site plan. The specific features representing the type are clearly evident in Lalji temple at Ambika Kalna (1739 AD) Dt. Burdwan, which have cutway corners with projecting angles to support the three turrets at each corner of the first storey. It has porch ahead with char chala roof. The cutway corners with projecting angles are profusely decorated with terracotta sculptures of war scenes, horse riding and animal actions. The Gopalbari temple at Ambika Kalna also bears the same distinct features (1766 AD). The Krishna Chandra temple at the same place (1751 AD) with similar features is primarily square without any such projected cutway corners.

The Ananda Bhairavi temple at Somra Sukharia (established in 1813 AD) even though three storied, does not have any porch in front of the sanctum.

The tiny double storied Sridhara temple at Sonamukhi Dt. Bankura (1845 AD) is a single entry edifice bearing cluster of twenty five turrets in the first floor itself having the central turret raised distinctly ahead of others. The temple is profusely ornamented in all four sides with the clear dimensional terracotta sculptures around.

V. DOMED ROOFING

Installation of domes or a number of domes appears to be a direct impact of the Islamic architectural practices of covering the shrines by large hemispherical domes resting on lofty arches springing from massive cross shaped coloumns or costructing a curvilinear roof with circular domed turrets at corners and a hemispherical dome. The Jalpesh Siva Temple at Maynaguri, believed to be constructed in the nineteenth century AD, appears to have been constructed in such direction with a tall hemispherical dome resting on a flat roof with domed turrets at the corners. Though not quite common, such temples with domed structures are occasionally found at various places, but the same are treated generally as deviod of architectural merit compared to enormous evidences of mediaeval Islamic architecture in Bengal.

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Maccutchion has identified the different categories of such temples as under.

a. Bhairavi Temple at Bindol, Raigunj, West Dinajpur-Rounded dome.

b. Harihara Temple at Aranghata, Nadia, Krishnagar-Twin pointed dome.

However the motif of inverted lotus dome is found more frequent which appears to be a modification of the Islamic practices adopted in the Hindu temples mostly with the octagonal or square plan in the district of Murshidabad which became an important Islamic political and cultural center in the seventeenth and eighteenth century AD. The topmost dome portion is shaped as a lotus chalice below which the outer as well as inner petals are spread or descend to clutch the structure below.

Such executions are further classified in two segments representing the roofing above straight cornice or a curved cornice. Instances in this category are as under.

a. Siva Temples near Maharaj Nandakumar's residence at Saidabad, Berhampore, Dt. Murshidabad- early 19th Century— Above Straight cornice.

b. Siva Temple at Byaspur, Cossimbazar, Murshidabad-1811 AD.

Above curved cornice, the inverted lotus dome motif has been largely used in Octagonal temples as already indicated. Such motif has been adopted for edifices even with Varandah all round. The instances in this regard may be cited as under.

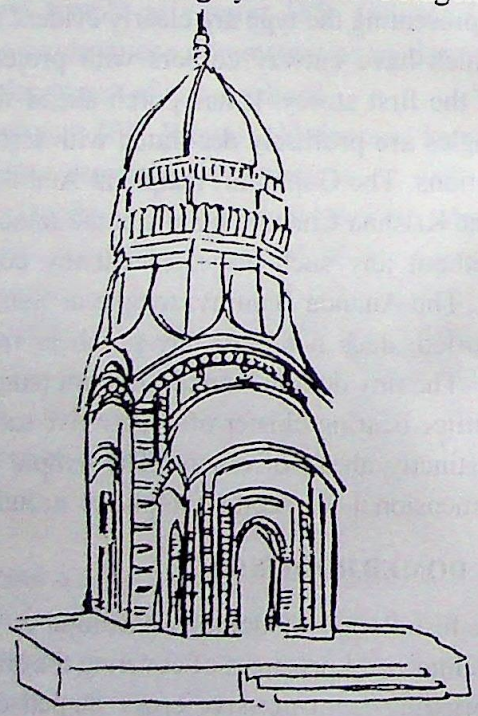
a. Bhavinswara Temple at Barnagar, Azimgunj, Murshidabad reportedly constructed in 1755 AD, is such a octagonal temple with Verandah all around.

b. Two Siva temples at Talihar, Nawgaon, Bangladesh and Siva temple at Jangipur, Raghunathgunj, Murshidabad are also the examples of the second category.

Octagonal domed temples with Verandah is a variant design in Bengal, instances of which are as under.

a. Radhavallava Temple at Mankar (Galsi, Burdwan) 19th Cent AD.

b. Kali Temple at Dimla, Rangpur, Bangladesh 19th Century AD.



Inverted lotus domed type rath- ek Bangla porch- Siva Temple -Vyaspur- Kashimbajar - Murshidabad

VI. SPRIED ROOFING:

The practice was developed under the influence of European church architecture and the turrets or Ratnas were shaped as spires on square bases or octagonal lower structres in the same patterns of the Ratna temples. Maccutchion classified such edifices with Octagonal spires above a square base, in the following categories.

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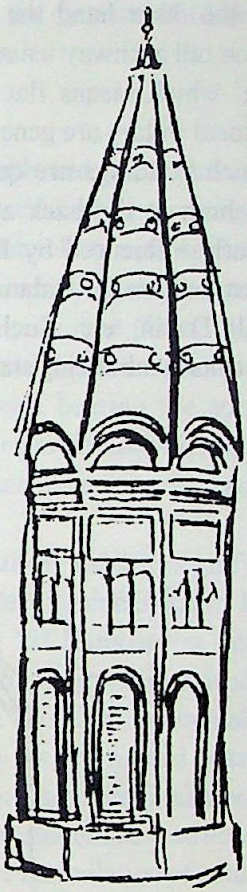
a. Entirely smooth- i) Siva Temple at Kalipore, Mymensingh- Mid 19th Cent AD.
   ii) Lalji Temple at Mahanad, Pandua, Hooghly 1851 AD.
b. Cornice curve repeated— Kali Temple at Sonargang Tangibari, Munshiganj, Dacca. 1838-43 AD
c. Cornice curve repeated and decorated with lotus flerons- Siva temple at Sonarang Tangibari, Munshiganj, Dacca— 1877-82 AD.
d. With vertical zig zag serrations— Narayana Temple at Tangibari Panam, Dacca. Late 19th Century AD.
e. Repeated bulbuous shapes like a diminishing series of Kalasha— Swasan Mandir at Jaydevpur, Dacca.

Octagonal spired temples are also available at Math of Khalia, Gopalgunj, Faridpur (smooth type) and at Sankara Math in Mahilara Gournadi, Barishal in Bangladesh reported to be constructed in nineteenth century AD.



Spired type on octagonal base- Kalicharan Math- Khalia-Faridpur

VII. CHANDNI OR DALAN

Chandni or flat roofed temples are the reductions in the traditional features and do not have any distinctive character at all. In certain cases, the tradition is maintained in the simple form of pillars with terracotta or stone ornamentation. The drastic deviation is however observed in construction of modern pillars with stucco decoration. The trend however persists largely from 19th century in the districts of Midnapore and Bankura. A single row of terracotta or a small finial is often retained on the facade or the front of the roof. The essential features of this type are elognated base which is generally square with porch length wise. Occassionally the porch is on the narrow side and yet some other temples have designs of flat roof with curved cornices in the district of Midnapore and Hooghly. The pillars are generally round and are in variants from two to five, forming arches like pointed gothic arches with architrave. It gives a general impression often that a pillared varandah forming arched entrance was constructed immediately in front of the main shrine which had single entrance.

The flat roofed temples are called either as Chandni or Dalan according to size and space. The local architects have categorized small flat roofed temples as Chandni and large flat roofed temples as Dalans. This is also supported by relevant foundation inscriptions. As for example the inscriptions of Radhakrishna temple at Hattala, Khirpai, (1864 AD), the Kali temple of Nandi family or Ramjivanpur (since renovated) and at certain Tamluk temples also, we find clear mention of the nomenclature 'Chandni'.

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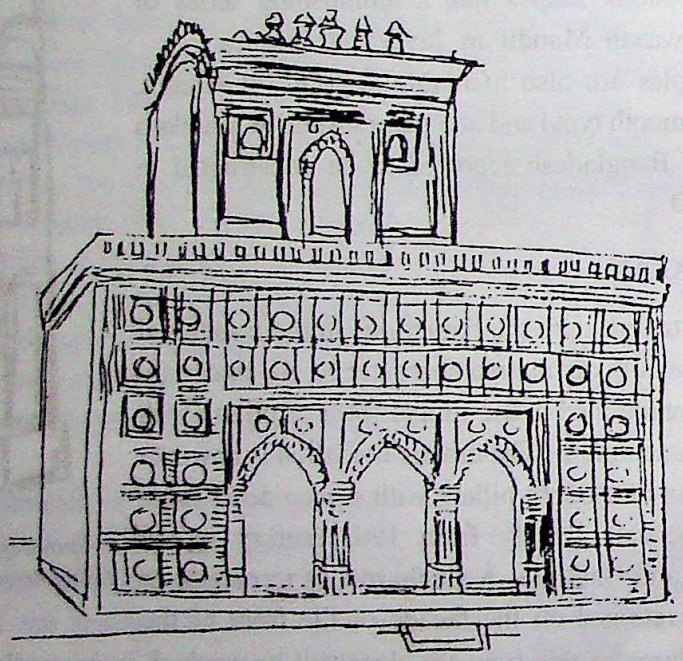
On the other hand the word 'Dalan' has been used to signify the type which has a single porch on tall archway usually four or more. The word 'Dalan' appears to be derived from Persian 'Dalan' which means flat roofed buildings. These are generally modern and common enough. Traditional pillars are generally round shaped leading to pointed gothic arches or with architraves. Few such buildings are quite complicated in design, sometime having a porch on a number of arches both at the back and at the front, some have a small upper storey, some are found to be greatly influenced by European neo classical style.The Zamindars and the rich people used to construct such 'Dalans' as residential houses or temples popularly known as Durga Dalan or Kali Dalan, etc. Such temples were generally constructed in affluent villages or urban settlements symbolizing status of monumentality without much of aesthetic or spiritual significance.



Standard Channi temple(flat roofed)- Gobindaraijiu Temple-Gazipur -Howrah

Flat roofed temples are sometimes stylized with various superstructures and forms including turrets at the corner of both stories with a central tower, shaping turrets like ridged rekha deuls on the flat roofs etc, giving a look like straight corniced Ratna temples. It is also found that these adjuncts are in fact upper temples not towers. The double storied flat roofed temples generally have smaller upper stories placed at the center with interior stairways. But there are instances also where the same emerged flush with the tower walls having exterior approach stairway.

The word 'Chandni' is the synonym of small upper storey room as per local dialect which also extends to mean small roofted edifices open on all the four sides on the bathing ghats of rivers or ponds. Whatever be the nomenclature, the style emerged at the phase of decadence of traditional architectural patterns with aesthetic merit, as evident in enormous specimens of

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Chandni and Dalan temples in the 19th and 20th century AD mainly in the districts of Midnapore, Hooghly and Burdwan of Bengal.

VIII. RASHMANCHAS, DOLMANCHAS OR TULSIMANCHAS.

The Rashmanchas and Dolmanchas are dedicated to Vaishnava faith and are constructed as shrines to celebrate the festival of Rashyatra or Dol festival of lord Krishna which are considered as a distinguished unit annexed to the main temple, where the deity travels to and shifted once a year on the auspicious occassion. Though it is not generally considered as a subsidiary shrine, constructions of such edifices for exclusive worship of the deities are quite rare. These therefore remained in general, as a center for celebration of the annual festival, which became architecturally very important in so far as their designs with unique variations though bearing the structural norms of the temples as a whole are concerned. Even though a very clear demarcation between Rashmanchas and Dolmanches is sometimes confused in popular parlance, the same is separately mentioned hereunder for separate presentation.

The nomenclatures of Rashmancha or Dolmancha have been popularly used to signify such edifices as to point out the holy festival meant for celebration. The oldest Rashmancha in Bengal appears to be the Vishnupur Rashmancha constructed by Malla king Vir Hambeer in the early 17th Century, which itself is a massive square (24.5 Mtrs on each side) structure raised on a high plinth having multiple arched gateways on all the four sides with a cluster of pyramidal roofs crowning the structure. In the outer portion there has been as many as ten arched gateways, which have been reduced to eight and finally to five in two consecutive rows before finally entering the Garbha griha. At the relevant time, we do not find any such stupendous structure of Rashmanch elsewhere signifying high architectural merit with innovative assimilation of south east Asian and Islamic trends. This in fact is an exceptional structure of architectural elaboration. It is evident that such installation of Dolmancha in conventional forms became very popular in eighteenth Century AD and that of Rashmancha in the nineteenth century.

The common features of the edifices of Dolmancha mostly erected during the eighteenth century AD are as under :

i) Dolmanchas were generally square standing on four coloumns.
ii) Multiple archways existed on all the four sides.
iii) Generally designed with Rekha, Chala or Ratna roofing patterns in the similar designs like those of temples, but with leaser variations.

Some of the characterstic Dolmanchas may be quoted as under :

a) Majherpara Dolmancha, Kankrakuli (Dhanekhali), Hooghly— Ridged Rekha
b) Nandadulal Dolmancha, Gurap (Dhaniakhali), Hooghly— Rekha
c) Dolmancha at Baichigram (Pandua), Hooghly— Rekha.
d) Dolmancha of Goswami family— Bijur (Memari), Burdwan, Rekha.
e) Kuchut Dolmancha (Memari), Burdwan- Rekha.
f) Radhakanta Dolmancha of Mallik family - Midnapore, Curved Ridged Rekha.

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g) Dolmancha of Goswami family
Satgachia (Memari), Bardhaman— Rekha, Octagonal on eight pillars (since abolished)
h) Govinda Dolmancha— Salnagar (Lakshmipasa), Jessore-Large Char chala.
i) Kishorimohan Dolmancha at Gossaiberh (Panskura), Midnapore— Char chala.
j) Krishna Balaram Dolmancha-Barsul, Bardhaman- Char Chala.
k) Kumarchak Dolmancha of Patra family, (Khanakul), Hooghly— Atchala.
l) Dolmancha of Roy family-Rautara (Amta), Howrah-Atchala
m) Shyamsundarjiu Dolmancha— Patihal (Jagatballavpur), Howrah— Atchala
n) Dolmancha near Rajbari-Narajol (Daspur), Midnapore-Pancha Ratna
o) Dolmancha at Mankar (Galsi), Burdwan-Pancha Ratna.
p) Dolmancha at Chakrabajit (Debra), Midnapore— Pancha Ratna.

The characteristic features of Rashmancha edifices which are mostly constructed in large numbers in the nineteenth century mostly in the districts of Midnapore, Hooghly, Howrah and Bankura may be indicated as under :

i) Rashmanchas are generally octagonal and hexagonal. Square form, are sometimes found though uncommon.
ii) Arched gateways are kept on all sides to facilitate view of the deity from all sides.
iii) Constructed generally on high plinth.
iv) Rashmanchas are pinnacled generally with Rekha turrets or Garlic bulb turrets (Rasun Chura) with variations in the number of turrets as under:
   a) Saptaratna— Generally found on Hexagonal Manchas, which is a rare variety.
   b) Navaratna— Commonly found on Octagonal Manchas and someties on the Square Manchas. Eight turrets have been installed in a single storey round a large central tower.
   c) Trayodasratna—Generally found on Square Rashmanchas with a central tower surrounded by twelve turrets in two rows.
   d) Saptadasratna—Most Commonly found on Octagonal Manchas showing sixteen turrets surrounding in two stories, a large central tower.
   e) Panchavinshatiratna— the variety is also found on Octagonal Rashmanchas showing twentyfour turrets in three stories round a large central tower.
v) Large terracotta or terracotta-stucco mixed figurines of musicians, drummers, dancers and dwarpalas have been found to be installed on the pillars of the Rashmanchas at various places in the district of Midnapore, Howrah and Hooghly.
vi) The large spectacular Rashmanchas of East Bengal are richly ornamented with terracotta designs having triple archways on all four sides and are of Pancharatna variety with five turrets of charchala design on four pillars.
vii) Mentionable architectural achievements in Rashmanchas or Dolmanchas are evident at Putia (Rajshahi) and Taras (Pabna), Bangladesh, where two enormous pyramidal structures of receding verandahs with terraces (four stories at Putia and three stories at Taras including the topmost kiosks) are found.

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Some of the representive Rashmancha with their characterstic feature are being mentioned hereunder as reference :

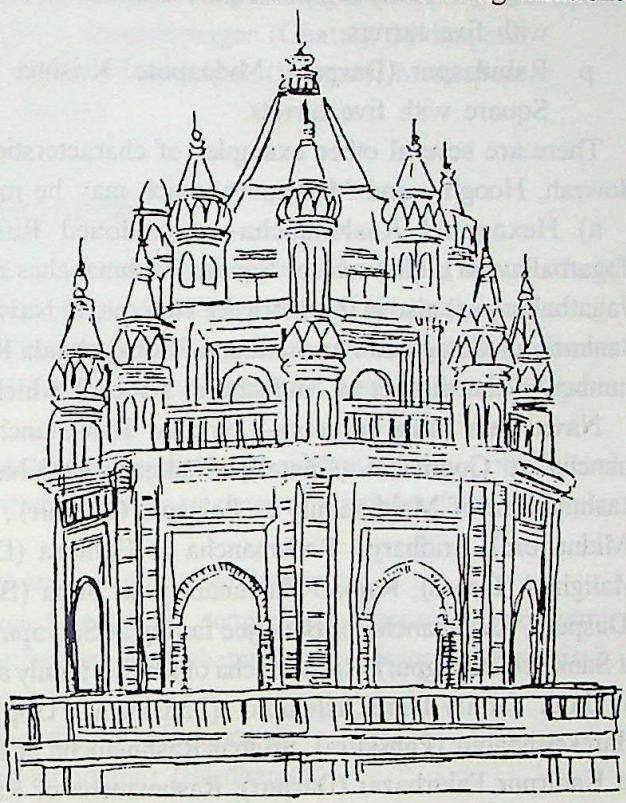
a. Mahishadal, Midnapore. Rajbari Rashmancha. Octagonal with seventeen Hexagonal turrets (straight cornices)

b. Nija Narajol (Daspur) Midnapore-Rajbari Rashmancha. Square with twenty five turrets in two stories. Twelve in the second storey and thirteen in the third storey.

c. Ajodhya (Bishnupur) Bankura. Girigobardhan Rashmancha. Octagonal with seventeen turrets.

d. Ajuria (Panskura) Midnapore— Lakshmi Janardan Rashmancha of Charan family— Octagonal with seventeen turrets (straight cornices)

e. Purbagopalpur (Panskura) Midnapore— Radhabinod Rashmancha of Adhikary family—Octagonal with seventeen turrets (straight cornices)



Saptadas Ratna Rashmancha with straight cornices and Baroque vase Pinnacles- Mahishadal, Midnapore.

f. Mangloi shyamballavpur (Panskura) Midnapore-Radhadamodar Rashmancha of Maiti Family—Octagonal with seventeen turrets (straight cornices).

g. Baliharpur (Daspur), Midnapore-Radhagobinda Rashmancha of Rai family— Octagonal with nine turrets (Straight cornices)

h. Saulan (Daspur), Midnapore-Shyamsundara Rashmancha-Octagonal with nine turrets. (straight cornices)

i. Alangiri (Egra), Midnapore-Raghunatha Rashmancha-Octagonal with nine turrets. (straight cornices)

j. Hadalnarayanpur (Patrasayer) Bankura-Rashmancha of Mondal family (Bara taraf)-Octagonal with seventeen turrets (curved cornice).

k. Baghmundi, Purulia-Rashmancha-Octagonal with nine turrets (curved cornices)

l. Harmasra (Taldangra) Bankura-Rashmancha of Ray family-Square Rashmancha with nine turrets.

m. Gopalpur (Daspur), Midnapore-Square Rashmancha with nine turrets.

n. Gobindaganj, Bardhankuthi (Rangpur)— Square Rashmancha with thirteen turrets.

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CHAPTER—IV

THEMES AND REPRESENTATIONS

While the common art motifs in the rich treasury of images were inspired by the institutional religion of Indian art— its norms, codes and ethics, the significant aesthetic ideals of the classical school of Brahmanism under the auspices of the strong base of feudalism continued to retain its root in the art and architectural activities of a millenium of years since the early days of Maurya, Sunga and Kushana empires. This is evident in intensive art activities coming to light through various discoveries and excavation from time to time. The cult rituals, emergence of cult beliefs and deities, conceptualisation as well as cognized presentation of images and after all, the systematized mythological assertions as recorded so far in the sequence of historical events positively lead to the proposition that there was in fact the strong presence of the institution of religions— which interfared the artistic executions of thoughts and beliefs on religious edifices. The ancient art objects which have been representing different historical phases including terracotta plaques or sculptures, are in general excavated from urban settlements and a significant portion of the artworks signify the sophistication and higher aesthetic ideals of socially advanced as well enlightened section of the people. There is no denying fact that the classical school of Brahmanism prevailed upon the spiritual as well as political administration from time unknown and the same turned out to be an institution which was deeply embedded on the soils of India. The institution at the outset emerged as a solvent between the royalty and the priesthood on the strict adherance of the rigid caste stratification— and the Brahmans could make it possible to become the beneficiaries of social production through enjoyment of surplus generated by the low caste people with the direct or indirect indulgence of the royalty. In order to put validity to such transactions, various structural changes were conceived through woven traditions into narrations, episodes and homiles— the works reflecting and reproducing certain attitudes towards life. The inherited truths and messages avowed purpose being to diffuse their role amongst people at large.

In fact the ancient legends of the Ramayana and Mahabharata dealing with the actions of the heroes as moral men and embodying human virtues and faculties as well as celebrating the power and work of various super human personages and deities. It is now evident that different versions of such legends were prevailing among the kingdoms, races, creeds tribes or clans at different levels of the social hierarchy from time unknown and in view the tremendous potential, acceptability and aesthetic qualities as well as resources the classical institution of Brahmanism

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succeeding the Vedic traditions took up the tasks of assimilations, value additions, composition and spiritual actions in the context of their great mental expansion and enlightenment. The language of Sanskrit as a vehicle of institutional culture remaining the properties of upper echlon of the society turned as the medium for the philosphic and ethno religious ideals emerged in the process of compilation, coordination of the great epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata,. It was indeed a process of coercion through which the divergent social trends or properties and traditions were taken over by the institution giving altogether the shape of testaments.

The epic age during which the Ramayana and Mahabharata received their final shape was period of racial and ideological conflict.

As opined by distinguished academicians, the Ramayana may be regarded as describing the penetration of Aryan culture into the whole of India and Mahabharata not only reflects the culture of a particular age but symbolises the various form of struggle between the forces of good and evil. The Bhagavat Gita is a great work of synthesis and the Bhagabata itself is marked by a great spirit of accommodation.

Manu's Dharmasastra emerged as a code for conservation of social order and contained several instructions regarding social rules and practices. It provided certain obligations, customs and conventions at a time when they were reportedly assesed. It also entailed lesson relating to the nature and limits of soverignty, the basis of local government, records of representative institutions, theories of punishment, the functions of the civil and revenue administration.

The Hindus considered the ideals and activities as interdependent and the societies as indivisible. On the reconciliation and equipose of duties and obligations, whether of individuals, classes or functionaries, the harmony not only of a particular state or community but of the whole creation was held to depend. The Manu's term 'Varna' in the Dharma Sastra has been interpreted as a spiritual and institutional sanction of class or caste (birth) which entailed division at the same time caused creation of parallel platform for the ethno cultural survival of the non institutional elements within the social space. The institution of caste was considered as a regulatory equipment for causing political as well as social discrimination for major section of the people who were gradually set aside from the centre of spiritual as well as political establishment. The excluded or discarded people also stayed away from such establishment and remained in isolation with their beliefs, traditions and practices. The mythology of such people was the language of the primitive men whose medium of expression through words was inadequate and therefore impugned to mythological concepts.

The clear cut social division emerged through the said social norms and practices emanated from contradiction between the highly organised intellectual, philosophical, spiritual and aesthetic ideals of the Brahmanism at the apex institutions and the discarded, illiterate and isolated masses in the outskirts of the enlightened periphery, continued to exist over several centuries.The norms and practices were rigid, inviolable and the same turned punitive in nature with the social administration left in the hands of upper echlcon of the society supported by the political hierarchy. The exclusive rights of worship were retained in the hands of the Brahmans— who had the

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prerogative to higher education and scholastic as well as cultural studies only. The heights of the cultural as well as artistic achievements in the Indian subcontinent were in fact the credentials of an advanced satelite sect with tremendous aesthetic enrichment through coercion of manual labours and taxes of down to earth masses— who were circumstantial victims of Brahmanism with little options to express themselves in terms of their own beliefs.

At the outset, the social bond in the stage of early feudalism was less antagonistic due to strong common religious commitments obligatory for all people irrespective of status. But later the majority of the people secluded in the process continued to believe in primitive magical practices and lower mythological rituals and did not have slightest influence of the rich achievements of the institutional culture. Indeed, there was an atmosphere of cultural apartheid and a cultural anti-thesis continued to prevail— which is evident in the profound indifference of the common masses and their gross neutrality in the ups and downs of the political institution as well as critical junctures in the historical process due to external agressions and ravages.

The institution of Brahmanism was all pervading and grossly canonized, which absorbed and assimilated all upcoming threats and uprisings cleverly in its fold without causing conflicts to turn into hostilities irrespective of the imperial supports at the helm of its affairs. The changes in religious faith at the apex level with the rulers switching over the faith to other religion, could only mitigate the outward ritualistic celebrations of the institution of Brahmanism. The social bonds emerged through the practice of Brahmanical spiritualism manipulated down to the lowest starta of the social hierarchy seems to have been a contributory factor for survival of the faith even in detrimental situation.

The intellectual framework of Brahmanism with all its coercive and manipulative aspects continued to set aside the lower mythological ideas and perceptions, yet deriving as well as salvaging the novelties and intellectual properties of the masses for their own sectarian enrichment of philosophy and thoughts. Directly or indirectly, either through thoughts or actions the Manu's Dharmasastra as an institution interfered the causes of social development intellectually and encountered fighters or the forces in the opposite direction, with the philosophy of universality to enable such factors destined to come within its gravitation. All religious, social and intellectual movements with the ideals of change or reform in the historical process after a certain period of time were recognized, reoriented and inculcated in the iconography or mythology in a systematic mannar, so that the manistream of the Hindu way of life retains its prominence and position either in nomenclature or spirit.

The late mediaeval temple building activities in Bengal, as we have already discussed may be considered as an ethno religious resurgence with the declared spirits of radicalism which in turn caused gradual removal of the debris of disintegrated, degenerated and dogmatic spiritual traditions in an atmosphere where political superiority of Islamic rulers continued to remain as an institution at the helm of affairs. The art and literature both as a common contributory phenomenon stem from a single source of inspiration and the rural life of Bengal continued to exist as a farm house of the of so called backward non-institutional products of culture with sets

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of beliefs and practices which were mostly influenced by various tribal primitive norms and rituals. A general view of the then social scenario reveals that the Brahmanical cults due to its loss of the political superiority and economic support, were extenuated and maintained their survival with stricter, rigid and dogmatic norms which were punitive, sectarian as well as derogatory, but had a very limited jurisdiction in the overall social framework.

The intellectual supremacy of Brahmanism was compromised sometimes with the lower mythological traditions or with other religious or syncretist movements in an ongoing process. It is worth while mentioning that the support of the royality to the priesthood through land grants and other means which were existing even in the epochs earlier to the days of Gupta empire, were allowed in exchange of providing spiritual sanction by the Brahmans to the absolute rights and jurisdiction of the throne over the society as a whole in economic, social and legal administration and justice. The benefits were systematically worked out in a mutually reciprocal manner notwithstanding the age old beliefs and practices since prehistoric days. The structural reforms in the social and cultural fields were enforced by the Brahmanical institution through adherence of the Manu Smriti— the leading Dharma provisions Sastra and Kautilyas Arthasastra and Kamandaka's Nitisastra— which became the celebrated manuals of polity.

The Buddhism and the Jainism were emerged in an atmosphere of radicalism when the internal contradictions of institutional Brahmanism were aggravated. But the human and family relationships introduced in the said process continued to exist. The rules were expounded to outline rights and obligations which were enforced by specific sanctions. The king or ruler was the final appellate anthority, but was bound by the awards of Dharma and was also obliged to recognise usage and custom founded on the recognised practices as per discretions or judgment.

The faiths of radicalism brought in great mental expansion and new political outlooks, and they exalted certain attitudes towards life with certain inherent truths and messages. The issues were infact supported by the royalty, which encourged the growth of a characteristic and original outlook of life, polity, domestic and political institution. The rapid development of specific social traditions, the emergence of new values in several sphers of life and discernible results of extra ordinary genius with marked intellectual courage and enterprise— though continued for several centuries, were ultimately bound to be assimilated to or absorbed in the inherited gravitation and social framework in the historical and religious traditions of Brahmanism, which were woven into the provinces of regulatory norms, intellectuality, rigidity of the institution of caste and dependance on mental equipment as on heritage.

The awards of 'Smarta' as an outfit of Brahmanic culture became such an indispensible institution or an unavoidable practice that the ardent Buddhist 'Pala' emperors Mahipala and Bigraha pala granted lands to Brahmans and several iniscriptions pertaining to the era signify compromising attitude of Pala emperors towards the attributes of Brahmanism, even at the era of decadence of its institution. This is a general observation on which there is not much of difference among the distinguished historians. Practically, all such Pala inscriptions as we may observe, have been codified with the systematic collections of the legends of Ramayana-

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Mahabharata, Puranas and other mythologies associated with Brahmanism and also the similes as well as metaphors-representing specific literary and aesthetic qualities of such testaments. The Buddhism and Jainism therefore could not bring any structural reforms despite a radical change in the sets of beliefs and shifting of patronage of royalty at the helm of affairs. The cultural synthesis of Brahmanism continued to prevail upon the social bond and on the liberalistion of the imposed moratoriun, once again revived or restored to its own institutional character.

The Istamic rule in Bengal in fact brought about a qualitative change in the sets of traditions, norms as well as practices in the beliefs of the people with altogether a different approach of the expansion of faith and Islamic brotherhood. The external as well as internal contradictions became acute and the rulers through forces, coercion or duress established the Islamic spirituality with the propagated ideals that there was no difference between the religion and the state. The traditions of Brahmanism and Buddhism in whatever form they existed, came under the acid test of survival in the face of the iconclastic zeal of the Islamic rulers who were committed to the cause of conversion. The ongoing threats to the existing religious institutions generated tremendous stress on the Social stratification and the followers of the traditional faiths either surrenderd or restricted themselves to disaster management activities including formulation of stricter norms or codes of ethics and enforcement therof, which caused sheer humiliation, distress and degeneration of such people in general. The loss of economic and political surpremacy and the waves of conversion thrusted upon the common morale of the decaying institutions, and an anomie was caused. In such crisis, the worst victims of social discrimination through proliferation of age old caste mechanism were common masses who preferred staying away from the dominating intellectual institution of Brahmanism at a neutral zone and remaining indifferent in seclusion from the manistream as hitherto. In fact, murky state of affairs within the Hindu community entailed imposition of prohibitions, dogmas, apartheid and unwarranted interference of the purported spiritual authority aggravated the internal contradiction of the communal formation of the society. The idoltary or idol worship as blasphemy or mockery of god was vehemently fought out by the Islamic rulers causing indiscriminate destruction or demolition of temples and images. The derogatory attitude of the rulers coupled with psychologically cowardice attitude of non believers of Islam, gave rise to degeneration of the Hindu community or institution which was manifested in various social as well as cultural practices of the era, including those relating to literature and art.

Yet another world of pleasure, pathos, emotion and sentiments did survive in a parallel surface, in the peripheral circles of the centre of power, pride and intellect. It had its own standing, own inertia and was a continent not only of the of poverty, illiteracy, prejudices but also of the sensuality. Monarchial upheavals, natural and supernatural calamites, wars, carnage did matter little to the humble folks— who had creations akin to their life and living. Their low profile existence in their own non material universe did neither have vibrations of glamour nor any contemplation of high spiritual achievement. A surprising consistency of cultural epiphenomenon with lower mythological faculties of the primitive fertility or mother cult and other animal or natural species was felt since

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the primordial days holding immense treasures of cultural properties— which sometimes broke the barriers of cultural apartheid and entered the world of institution. In a strictly canonised religious edifice of the institution, the mysterious world of common humble folks obtained gradual access and this sort of eventuality arose only when the established institution was in a dwindling phase. This happened not only on a single occasion but remained as a trend. In the same way, the institution did also derive elements of sensible creativity and achievements of humble folk which helped further enrichment of the institutional art and literature.

Mediaeval Bengal under Islamic rule witnessed an instability of governance with frequent change of rulers at the helm of affairs. Power became centralised in the realm of fragmented, space but the authority of Islam in absolute terms remained beyond question The tenure of Islamic rule was too long and after the lapse of several years of initial anomy, the rulers for the sake of wider recognition as well as acceptability resorted to a higher tolerance of the rituals of non believers and had shown greater flexibility in social and administrative norms and practices. Various religious sects or beliefs with definite and specific spiritual missions expanded their activities within the given space of the monolithic state hood of Bengal. The subsided, depleted institutional residues of Brahmanism after the total loss of political and social supremacy, the activities of Islamic missioneries like sufis, Darbesh etc. and the modest survival or revival of the folk cultural universe beyond the periphery of the dominating institutions, in fact promoted a complex synthesis of homogeneous beliefs and movements leading to the generalisation of dialectical normatives, contradictions and cultural resurgence.

A. The emergence of Bengal Vaishnavism as a form of social cosciousness— its emotional and rational contributions.

The remarkable and lamentable decadence of religious life and ideals in Bengal, as already indicated, the tyranny of the alien rule was aggravated by the greater social tyranny of dominant Brahmanism with its protective, but despotic spirit. Minute rules and restrictions of an unchanging and stringent code of religious and social rituals were prescribed and the effort is best exemplified by the great, but narrowly conservative work of Raghunandana. No doubt the object of such social legislation was to secure stability of conduct, but it afforded little room for expansion and progress, and little escape from inevitable bondage and burden. On the other hand even the exclusive Brahmanism in its instinct of self preservation had to relax itself so far as to adopt deities and countenance practices of strange origins, such as those associated with the local cults of Manasa, Vasuli and Dharmathakur. The degraded Sahajiya and Nathism, and various phases of decadent Buddhism and Tantricism— over all of which the mantle of Hinduism was thrown, brought in superstitous rites and doubtful practices which weakened the inherited spirituality of Brahmanism as a religion. The Chaitnya Chandrodaya of Kavi Karnapura speaks of false asceties, terrible Kapalika and corrupt Trantrikas and reference of unclean meat, drink and women. 'Religion' laments Vrindavandasa "was reduced to a mere form and there was no faith in men." The times were such as needed a reformer and saviour.

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The city of Nabadwipa, which witnessed the birth, youth and early manhood of Chaitanya was at that time a famous seat of mediaeval sanskrit learning but the kind of learning it favoured is typified by its production of a highly scholastic system of new logic, 'The Navya Nyaya'. It was also the strong hold of orthodox Brahmanism as well as of new Tantricism and produced a stringent social dictator like Raghunandana, as well as obscure Tantric rites like Krishnananda. It's great reputation of Sanskrit scholarship and orthdoxy drew students from all parts of the country, but it created an arid and intellectual atmosphere, highly materialistic, narrow, proud and even sceptical.

Though the social upsing which entailed a qualitative tranformation in the socio cultural front, had in the forefront the new perceptions promulgated by Chaitayadev, it is in fact that Chaitanya's religious personality started a new movement and only gave a new interpretation to an old faith. Long before Chaitanya, the melodious Padavalis of Jaydeva in sanskrit and the songs of Chandidasa in Bengali had also popularised Radha Krishna cult with their largess of Vaishnava devotional sentiments.

Bengal vaishnavaism appears indeed as a fairly homogenous cult, but in reality it is a complex product. Its tradition is not only multiple but also polygenous. The two fundamental elements which go to form texture of Bengal Vaishnavaism are found to be derived more or less from Vaishnavism in general, the first and foremost of these is the general doctrine of Bhakti and emotional service of love and devotion as a means of spiritual realisation but equally important is the Krishna cult, intimately connected with it, as forming ground of devotional attitude. 'Bhakti' is generally used with particular reference to the terms of Gnana and Karma by many sects of Hinduism. However Bengal Vaishnavism has its special connotation. This connotation is the result of as much of historical development as of individual teaching and experience of particular saints and devotees. The various influences which shaped the ideas of Bhakti is its different stages of growth and brought it to its present connotation are spread over centuries of obscure, religious, cultural and literary depictions which are sometimes erratic and undefined. Streatching into the early Vaishnavism and Narayana worship of Mahabharata, it loses itself in a complex body of myth, legend, superstition, belief, sentiment and philosophy, but it emerges as a more or less definite form in the Bhagavatism and Krishna-Vasudeva worship of Bhagavata Gita. On this basis, it was systematised and created into a philosophy in late Bhakti works like Narada Sandilya Sutras. It continued as a doctrine till about the end of eightth century AD when theory of spiritual non dualism and world illusion promulgated by the great Sankaracharya and his followers appears to have imperilled dualistic metaphysical foundation. This must have led to a vigorous revival of Vaishnavism in the subsequent centuries. About the 12th Century AD, we have four sampradayas or schools of thought into which the Vaishnava movement divided itself. These are well known Sribrahma, Rudra and Sanakadi Sampradayas and Nimbarka. Each of these schools developed its doctrines and religious practices and wrote an extensive literature. As against purely monistic teaching of non duality of Shankara, (Advaita-Vada), these schools expounded respectively what are conveniently known as theory of qualified non duality (Visista Advaita vada), duality (Dvaita

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vada), Pure non duality (Suddha dvaita Vada) and Dualistic non duality (Dvaita Advaita vada). The essential difference between these schools of thought consists in the attitude which they respectively assume towards the absolute non dualistic position of Shankara. Various degrees of essential dualism involved in religious attitude of Bhakti entailed a distinction between devotee and the deity implying an emotional realisation of a personal god in the individual consciousness. The position however was reconciled with the absolute, impersonal and non dualistic interpretation given by the Vedanta sutra by Shankara. Each of these schools therefore wrote a fresh commentary on the Vedanta Sutra in which an attempt was made to establish a theory which would permit the individual exercise of love and pity in a world of reality. Some of these maintained a frankly dualistic position and others expounded various degrees of qualified dualistic views.

The subsequent history of Vaishnavism as a religious persuasion follows the lines of worshipping God as a person (Saguna Upasana) and through symbols and manifestations (Pratiki upasana). The faith is monotheistic, whether the object of adoration be Vishnu, Narayana, Vasudava, Rama, Krishna or one of the numerous incarnations of them, but this loving adoration of a supreme personal god, to whose grace (Prasada) the devotee must surrender himself (Prapatti) is often found not unaccompanied by a popular polytheistic reverence for 'other gods'—Brahma, Siva and a million of godlings who are classed as subordinate creatures and given well defined powers and functions. The faith believed in a personal creator, in various theories of personal impersonal creation (Sristi) or emancipation (Vyuha), in the energic power (Sakti). Incarnation of the divinity in a peculiar eschatology postulates various degrees or stage of liberation in sin as anthetical to Bhakti. It is in the necessity of a spiritual guide (Guru Vada) in the efficacy of Mantra or recitation of some form of the blessed name (Naman) in the worship of symbols and manifestations (Rupa). Such acts are aimed at complete surrender to divine grace and compassion and above all, in the supremacy of a mystic and emotional form of adoration or communion over intellectual conviction adduced by mere knowledge. Different modes of worship and ritualism were developed by such of the schools, different symbols and manifestations were preferred and distinct sectarian marks were worn. But all the sects agreed in exalting Bhakti as the heart of worship as the sole religious attitude of love and service towards a personal god.

As already mentioned hereinbefore. mediaeval Navadwipa as a centre of sanskrit scholarship turned highly materialistic, narrow, proud and even sceptical. Vedantaism formed the topic of conversation of the cultured few who looked down upon the emotional abandon of Bhakti as weak and vulgar. They were Pantheists who believed in no other god other than their ownselves. The self satisfied formalism of the orthdox Smarta system which prescribed religious merit and absolving efficacy to a somewhat mechanical observance of of fixed duties and ceremonies. Such system hardly encouraged any exhibition of personal devotional fervour or any inner sensibility for morality and religion.

The Vaishnava community staying over there, being dissatisfied with unspiritual surroundings, confined themselves to have religions discourses and studies of Srimad Bhagavata to satisfy their

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spiritual longings by singing of the name praises or exploits of Sri Krishna. The small community was inspired and encouraged in Vaishnava tendencies by Madhabendra Puri and his disciples. Advaita Acharya who used to be a commanding figure of the community, was disciple of Madhabendra and was famous for his scholarly attainments, pious life and sincere devotion. Advaita very early recognized the power and fell under the spell of Chaitanya's rapturous devotion. A close relationship sprang up between the pious old man and young religious enthusiaist. His apparent leaning towards non dualistic vedanta is well indicated. The Chaitanya Bhagvata describes him as the greatest teacher of Gnana, Bhakti and Vairagya. It is highly probable that Advaita, following the tradition of Sridhara Swami and Madhabendra Puri believed in tempering intellectual Advaitaism with emotinoal Bhakti. But he seems to have very closely identified himself with the new movement and influenced its course of development to such an extent that he came to be regarded in the later history of the sect as one of the five tattvas or realites in the new faith. There can be no iota of doubt that in spite of Vedantic scholarship, Advaita was the precursor of the devotional Vaishnava tendency which later on took definite shape as Chaitanyaism. The small band of devout men who gathered round him formed the nucleus and presented the incipient features which were to mark the courses of the new movement. They prepared the way for Chaitanya and welcomed him as their leader-whose life and personality gathered together the prevalent religious forces.

A fairly large member of references are available for study of Chaitanya's life and personality which provide not only the details of his career but also about the circumstances attending upon the growth of the movement he initiated, its method, its extent and its contagion. Such biography is a distinctly Vaishnava contribution to the Mediaeval Bengal and by creating it the movement added a new genre to the literature and art of the country. The prolix and exuberant metrical narratives are often presented in a distorted perspective by an imagination which is ready to go to the utmost limits or want of limits, of fanatical devotion, deification. Chaitanya's miraculous legends and grotesquely absurd accounts about him appear to have rapidly grown even during his life time. Nevertheless, we have a picture of great human interest and appeal and the purely devotional aspect of Chaitanay's career which is depicted with sincere and loving care with all attending details and circumstances.

Chaitanya possessed great qualities of leadership and extra ordinary power over the minds of men. Absorbed in his devotional ecstasies, he hardly ever sought to build up a cult or a sect. The notable conversions achieved due to the powerful imperssions he could create on receptive minds by his outstanding religious personality. The sectarian pioneering, laborious scholarship and devotional austerity were followed by men with great capacity. Chaitanya's personal relation to his leading disiples as borne out of orthodox records clearly demonstrate that on the main lines of its growth and expansion, the movement was directly inspired by the example of his life and experience, even if he did not actually persevere at the task. From the very begining the movement bore the impress of his individuality and developed on the lines of his spiritual experience. The standard of Vaishnava life and devotion set up by his own life the new spirit of emotionalism

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which he imparted to traditional piety, the wide spread emotional appeal of the new mode of Samkirtana which he developed, the sincerity and contigious passion of his realisation of the Radha-Krishna Cult, the expansive and literating power of his catholic and simple ideas of worship, his devotional fancies about the Vrindavana settlement, his winning over the scholars and devotees who were to be future organisers of the sect both on its practical and devotional sides, and inspiring them with a selfless love for the task,– in one word his great religious life and personality clearly gave an initial direction and an impetus to the movement, which gradually organised itself in the hands of capable followers into a definite sect and cult.

Nityananda— was endowed upon the leadership of the sect at Nabadwipa and adjoining places, but he could hardly cccupy the same place in the estimation of the heterogenous sect and possessed the same compelling power of character and personality as Chaitanya did. He took the revolutionary step of admitting under the banner of Chaitanyaism all classes of men without any discrimination. Nityananda's bold action received entire approval of Chaitanya himself, but it seems likely that it was in conflict with Chaitanya's inherited regard for the established order. Chaitanya in fact proclaimed obliteration of distinction, but did not want a total disruption of social usage and tradtion. Catholicity and equaltiy in matters of worship, which Chaitanya certainly upheld, did not in practice a vigorous application in social matters. Most of his associates and followers inclusive of Advaita appear to have adopted the conservative attitude and they either did not approve of the step or stood aloof from it. Thus an important difference arose in the sect which had enduring consequences.

Chaitanya did never encourage any particular caste or person to the monoploy of the function of spiritual guide or teacher himself, but he himself selected men like Rupa, Sanatana and Raghunatha Dasa for the task of propagating the faith. Nevertheless a somewhat curious distinction appears to have been implied between religious and social spheres. The broadening of religious privileges was not taken necessarily to mean enlargement of social rights. There is nothing on record to show that Chaitanya ever wanted to interfere actively with the established social order with time honoured Varnasrama Dharma, and he sympathised with the radicalism of some of his followers like Nityananda who wanted to work out the implications. With regard to the universal brotherhood promulgated by Chaitanya, it can be evident that he wanted not social, but religious freedom and fellowship. There had been anti caste inclinations of Chaitanya's religious attitude, but he never pretended to be a great social reformer.

In fact there was no real coordination between the different groups which had sprung up spontaneously and independently around Chaitanya or around some of his immediate associates. We hear adorers of Chaitanya's Nagara-Bhava, followers of Advaita, admirers of Gadadhara, devotees as well as detractors of Nitaynanda. Each of Chaitanya's associates and devotees appears to have developed a considerable community of disciples of his own and taught the cult of Bhakti according to the light each had received in his own way from the Master.

In spite of the lack of solidarity in the history of the sect, there was a certain agreement on the doctrinal and theological side. In the process of establishment of a definite cult of worship

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of Chaitanya himself, some of the old dogmas were modified and new dogmas were developed. But it was a destiny that the creed and tenets as fixed by the Goswamins of Vrindavana prevailed and ruled the whole community. The fundamental doctrines of the cult therefore lends ceredence to the six Goswamins of Vrindavana.

Chaitanyas ecstatic devotion and power of working miracles were enumerated by his biographers including Krishnadasa, Murari Gupta, Vrindavana Dasa and others of Navadwipa circle. But the real significance lies in the force of his inner spiritual experience which gave him an extra ordinary power over the minds of men. Chaitanya closed his 'Tol' after his return from Gaya, his scholarly pursuits, pride of learning, the zest for dialectic deputations– all passed out of his life, which now more began to move in a new atmosphere of entirely different interests. Outside the Srimad Bhagbat Gita, the newly discovered Brahma Samhita, the Samgita Nataka of Ramananda, and the devotional lyrics of Lilasuka. Jaydeva, Vidyapati and Chandidasa he appears to have relished next to nothing.

It should be recognised that the extremely emotional mode of Chaitanya's religious devotion never made any demand upon the intellect nor wanted the nourishment of any other interest. There was no study and no production. He lived in and for mystic ecstasies and trances, they consumed all his energies. He left his own life and personality as an inspiring example of devotion and as his best legacy to his faithful followers. On his immediate and intimate disciples, therefore fell the laborious task of systematizing the doctrines and practices of the faith and defining the creed. His Navadwip followers did not do it, rather they did not have the training and capacity to do it properly. Chaitanya therefore chose Sanatana and Rupa for the highly technical and difficult task for which they appeared fully competent. Much of the propagated teachings were written within a few years after his death and it can be said that the same were directly inspired by Chaitanya. Upon the two brothers Rupa and Sanatana, Chaitanya himself is said to have imposed the special task of expressing its theology and its Rasa Sastra, in which they were very materially reinforced by the mystical metaphysical scholarship of their nephew Jiva. They were men of great literary capacity, acute theologians, passionate poets as well as ascetic devotees. Their austere, saintly character, their selfless devotion to the cause, their laborious and life long scholarship gave them a unique influence as the three authoritative Goswamins or teachers of the cult. The other closely associated with the stupendous task were Gopala Bhatta-reported to have been a south Indian Brahman with profound scholastic ability, Raghunath Bhatta and Raghunathdasa— whose passionate devotional sensibiliy produced various sanskrit poetical works including poems and panegyric and Bengali lyrics on the erotic-mystic themes.

The said six Goswamins own the credit of working out and defining the whole system of tenets peculiar to Bengal Vaishnavism, which however were supplemented and modified in later times. The building up of modern Vrindavana as the chief intellectual and religious centre of the sect was due to them. The philosophy, theology, rituals and Rasasastra of the sect were created at the centre.

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A system of mystical emotional dogmatics, the strictly philosophical views of the Bengal school of Vaishnavism are intimately mixed up with the details of its theologism and its emotional erotic mysticism, which are set forth in its pious text books of legend and fancy. Speculative thoughts therein cannot be disentangled from its sentimental and mythical development. The Bengal Vaishnavism was in fact a deliberate historical religion promulgated by a definite founder. But in the practical working out of the system by the Vrindavana Goswamis, the direct intuitive realisation or the teachings of Chaitanya did hardly find any place. Excepting the usual obeisance and homage to Chaitanya and general passages testifying to his identity with the supreme deity, there is no where in the extensive works of Sanatana, Rupa and Jiva, any direct reference to his personal views and teachings. The theologians are chiefly concerned with the godhead of Krishna and his lila as revealed in their older scriptures. Krishna in their theory is not an Avatar, but is alone supreme deity himself (Shyam Bhagavat). They are almost silent about Chaitanya lila and its place in their devotional scheme. It is somewhat surprising that while presenting a system of religion in his name, they relied upon older sources only and did not refer at all to his direct realisation of spiritual truths. There cannot be any doubt that the devout life of Chaitanya inspired these faithful disciples, but in building up of their systems of theology and philosophy there is no reference to the life, personality and Chaitanya himself. There is on the other hand, an entire dependence upon a complicated system of text interpretation rather than upon any direct and vivid spiritual illumination. It must be admitted that in these treatises we reach a high level of emotional Bhakti doctrine in the setting up of a vital and practical system of religious beliefs, and the life and personality of Chaitanya must have been to his devout follower a powerful exemplification of these beliefs and doctrines, but we still move in an indefinite haze of mythology, sentiment and speculation derived from puranic tradition. The intellectual seriousness or the ethical nobility of the tenets is hardly propounded with the force of direct realisation in as much as they are completely merged in a floating mass of uncertain myths, legends, traditional beliefs.

The peculiar method and standpoint of the Bengal school of Vaishnavism reflected in the works of six Goswamins for scriptural justification and interpretation entails amazing sphere of learning but the learning is of a limited sectarian kind. The theological acumen is praiseworthy, but the whole discussion and its pot pourri method are marked more by intellectual subtlety and intellectual virility. It in fact derives a geat deal in an eclectic spirit from the previous Vaishnava system especially from the Ramanuja Sect.

The ritual and devotional practices of Chaitanyaism were codified by Gopal Bhatta— one of the six Vrindavana Goswamins in his elaborate and erudite Hari Bhakti Vilasha (Charm of devotion of Hari). The highest form of Chaitanyism dispenses with mere Sastric rule and outward ceremony, and lays stress upon an inner and more esoteric way of realisation. But it also does not ignore the impulse of devotional acts, which comes from the injunction of the Vaishnava Sastra and outward form of piety. The Vaidhi Sadhana Bhakti is a mechanical process relying upon Vidhi or injunction of the Sastra. It is an important step to the highest type of spontaneons

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'Prem Bhakti'. The works are now regarded to be highest ritual authority of the Bengal School of Vaishnavism.

The Hari Bhakti Vilasha epitomises Vaishnava Achara and includes a great deal of 'Smriti' topics. It professes to follow the Sruti and Smriti. Since the theology of Bengal school places a somewhat different interpretation upon the terms, it draws very largely upon the Puranas, especially upon the Purnas which are regarded as canonical sources by the school. Though it involved Smriti of its own on the basis of its own sectarian scriptures, it agreed with later orthodox Smriti Nibandhas in accepting the Puranas as an authoritative source.

Like the orthodox Smriti again in Bengal which absorbed very largely Tantric ideas, rites and formulas since the time of Raghunandana, most of the rituals and ceremonies of this Vaishnava Smriti appears to have been profoundly influenced by the tenets and practices of Tantra, which must have been widely and deeply spread in Bengal at this time.

The extensive work of Gopal Bhatta purports to be an epitome of Vaishnava Sadachara, and it has little to say on social usages. Gopal Bhatta appears to have great faith of Varnasrama Dharma in his general acceptance of the system of caste, in his exaltation of Brahmans and depreciation of Sudras. Vaishnavas in his opinion are to be governed by ordinary Smriti rules in their social duties and relations. Minute ceremonial requirements of its religious practices have been indicated in Hari Bhaki Vilasha.

The attitude of Bengal Vaishnavaism towards traditional pity and towards established social order is not so radical as one might imagine and the limitations of caste or sex is still acknowledged in the sphere of ceremonial worship. The conservatism is noteworthy, it could never have proved a solvent to social exclusiveness or caste rigidity in the history of the faith. In the higher stage of devotion, the offering of love needs no priest nor ritual, for the grace of god is in no man's keeping nor attainable by anything else but devotional love and self surrenders.

A careful examination of the entire process by the distinguished scholar Sushil Kumar De is quoted here under as a relevant proposition of the present issues.

"But in would not be correct to say that Chaitanyaism sought to remove religion entirely from carefully guarded ritual or sacredotal sanction, and throw its privileges to all men and women without discrimination. No doubt Chaitanya himself is reported to have admitted into devotional fellowship low caste men as well as Muhammadans, but his biographical records also indicate that he never altogether repudiated traditional piety and traditional social usage"— (Page 519– Vaishnava faith and movement)

The systematization of the supreme religious emotion of Bhakti was meticulously done by Rupa Goswami, one of the followers of Sri Krishna Chaitanya among the six Goswamins of Vrindavana. He himself was a poet and rhetorician, as well as devout scholar and ascetic giving an authoritative exposition of the emotional aspect of Vaishnava Bhakti. Rupa Goswami's two systematic Sanskrit works on Vaishnava Rasa Sastra namely, the Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu and its supplement the *Ujjala Nilamani*, the reglious sentiment of Bhakti has been approximated to the supreme relish

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of literary enjoyment known as Rasa of the orthodox Sanskrit poetics. His two works are embodying Bhakti Rasa Sastra— which is a kind of rhetoric of Bhakti with all its psychology, conceit and imagery.

The mediaeval Vaishnavas of Bengal conceived the love of Krishna as an aspect of psychology and Rupa wrote a rhetoric of the erotic sentiment. Since Bhakti was conceived as a Rasa, it was essentially of the nature of a subjective emotion. The love of Krishna was installed as the dominant feeling (Sthayi Bhava) which through its appropriate excitants (Vibhavas), as well as ensuants (Anubhavas) and auxiliaries (Vyabhichari Bhavas) was raised to a supreme relishable condition in devotee's susceptible mind as the Bhakti Rasa.

To appreciate the fundamentals, it is evident that the presentation of Bhakti as a psychological entity, as a literary, erotic emotion transmuted into a deep and ineffable devotional sentiment which is intensely personal and is yet impersonalised into a mental condition of disinterested joy. The attitude is a curious mixture of the literary, the erotic and the religious and the entire scheme as such is an extremely complicated one. The elaborate and subtle psycholising and refining the inherited rhetorical traditions was largely inspired by an antecedent and still living poetic experience of the works of Jaydeva and Lilasukha, which found expression also in the vernacular poetry of Vidyapati and Chandidasa as well as by the simple piety of popular religions which reflected itself in the conceptions of such puranas as the Srimad Bhagvata, the fountain source of Vaishnava Bhakti.

Rupa Goswami's Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu— which is the original authoritative work on the emotionalism of Bengal Vaishnavaism, is fairly appropriate in designating an abstruse treatise of bewildering propositions and of boundless depths of analytical acumen.

The Bhakti in Mahabharata in general is often explained by the analogy of love of the wife for her husband and the term Bhakti in the later sutras of Narada and Sandilya is made interchangeable with the terms Priti, Bhava, Raga or Anukriti as expressions of ardent love and yearning. But the passionateness of earlier theistic devotionalism was never entirely divorced from intellectual satisfaction or moral earnestness. All worship or salvation are regarded as nothing more than a blissful enjoyment of the divine sports, involving personal consciousness and relation, direct or remote, between the enjoyer and the enjoyed. But the erotic sentiment in the sports of Krishna borders definitely upon the sense devotion and leans perceptibly and dangerously towards the erotic passion. The ultimate felicitious state is conceived as an eternity of enjoyment of the erotic sports of Vrindavana in which the faithful serve Krishna as did the Gopis. Though the doctrine is interpreted figuratively or philosophically, the erotic emotionalism is essential and prominent in literary or artistic facts. There is a further accession and interpretation of the romantic legends. The puranic life of Krishna is brought to the foreground and the older epic figure of Vasudeva Krishna is transformed beyond recognition. The ancient epic spirit of godly wisdoms and manly devotion is replaced by a new spirit of mystical and thological fancy. The fancy entails tender rapture over divine babyhood and of sensuous and erotic passion of ecstasy over the loveliness of divine adoloscence and the god is moulded accordingly. The Vrindavanlila appealed

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for an emotional religion and protested against unsatisfying intellectuality of mere metaphysics. Therefore the theory of Bhakti Rasa appealed to the exceedingly familiar and authentic intensity of human moods and sentiments.

In the atmosphere of highly passionate and sensuons life and literature or art there is a marked development of the dubious erotic possibilities. Nevertheless Bengal Vaishnavism sought to realise in its theory and practice the actual passion of the deity, figured as a friend, son, father or master, but chiefly and essentially as a lover. It is however noteworthy that Vrindavanlila is not a mere symbol of divine allegory, but a literal fact of religious history. The Radha-Krishna myth as depicted in Purnas and elaborated in the Kavyas, Natakas and Campus as well as in the Rasasastra, of the sect as the basis of its theology and devotional life is taken as a vivid historical as well as super historical reality and there is no suggestion of its being an allegory.

The intense amorous attitude despite the subtle and elusive juggling with psychological complexes and theological refinements, inspired not only the Sastras and professedly devotional works of Bengal Vaishnavism, but also enliven its mass of replendent lyrics in Sanskrit and Bengali with the practical possibilites of its mystical erotic impulse. There was immense literary gain notwithstanding the devotional value of the attitude. The Vaishnava Bhakti generated attitudinal transparency in love or Prema-which became an unfailing and rich source of literary or artistic inspiration as well as of religious emotion. It was personal in ardour, concrete in expression and original in appeal. A psychological rhetoric of the endless diversity of the passionate condition was produced. It reproduced the classical phraseology and ideas of Sanskrit rhetoric of Rasa. The erotic religious application and subtilising of emotional details were novel, intimate and inspiring. These aesthetic and emotional conventions were implicitly accepted in its literary and artistic production. Despite a psychological formalism and rhetoric of ornament and conceits and its pendantry of metaphysical sentimentalism, there can be no doubt that the inspiration supplied by the erotic emotionalism spread over the works of Rupa Goswami to later Vaishnava literature, had been of a deep and far reaching character. There was no doubt a human appeal in its religious attitude which imparted to its literary and artistic effusions an enduring emotional and aesthetic value.

The most remarkable feature of the Chaitanya movement is its extra ordinary literary or artistic activity. The power and vitality of its inspiration are evidenced by the vast literature and artistic creations, which were produced both in learned classical tongue and in the living language of the province. On the one hand it enriched the field of sanskrit scholarship or classical art activity by its solid and laborious productions in theology, philosophy, ritualism and Rasa-Sastra, on the other it poured itself out lavishly in song and story almost creating as it did, a new literary and artistic epoch by its fruitful contributions of great diversity and charm.

The abandunt and versatile literature and art works it produced have been construed as the permanent premises emanated out of the movement. At the earlier stages, the literature was

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expressed in the classical sanskrit and took various forms. The use of Bengali in Chaitanyaite productions is a major turning point in the historical sequence of Bengali songs and lyrics (Padas) and biographical and narrative works. There can be no doubt that they constitute one of the most important and influential aspects of its literary energy, for both lyric and biography are new literary genres which Chaitanyaism created for the first time in Middle Bengali and through which its passionate appeal spread widely and rapidly. Even though the best mediaeval Bengali biographical records belong to this period, the really creative epoch of the resplendent Bengali song and lyric inspired by Chaitanyadev comes a little later. The richer emotional and poetical sensibilities of this movement, which exalted emotion over reason and fancy over fact are expressed in a series of mystically, but gorgeously impassioned stories, poems, dramas, campus, lyrics, hymns, songs and paregyrics composed by Kavikarnapura, Ramananda Raya, Raghunath Dasa, Rupa-Jiva, Krishnadasa Kaviraja and other. as well as by a host of minor poets, where devotional verses are collected together in Rupa's anthological survey of the Padyavali. It would seem therefore that the religious revival must have supplied an emotional inflatus which produced wonderful results in Bengali poetry for more than a century, but it also led to a fervent expression of devout feelings even though the more difficult, but perhaps more rich medium of Sanskrit.

The literary or artistic works entailed different spheres or segments including biographical works and different literary faculties or narratives etc. The biography of Chaitanyadev has been potraied from the excessively zealous devotional point of view, the credibility of which is amazing. There never prevailed any tradition of meticulous chronicling or critical appreciation and interpretation of historical facts as such. The writings undoubtedly contain historical material but the extent and value of such material are immensely variable. The works are not merely meant for sober knowledge, but for more literary edification. They could never divest themselvs of their legendary and poetic associations. This is evident in their complacent confession of facts and fiction and in their general indifference to the realities of characterisation in their intermingling of divine and human action, in their unhesitating belief in magic and miracle and in their deep faith in incalculable human destiny.

Attractive philosophy, artistic setting and ordinary history featured the biography which was prosaic and could not be disciplined by its formal conception of art. The tradition of unrestrained fancy or overdressed fiction in the biographical and historical contents of the works was evident. These have been dealt with from the literary point of view and were embellished with all its characteristic graces, refinements. The slender thread of actual history is buried under a mass luxuriant poetry or poetical exaggeration. The historical personage of Chaitanyadev is taken as the central figure, but he is poetically magnified and surrounded with all glory, glamour and legendary hero.

The issues have been dealt with from the devotional point of view and the hero is a saint or is regarded as the very incarnation of the divine being. Poetic art and imagination have glorified

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the picture and historical narratives are woven around the same. The incidents and characterisation are not vitiated by partiality and biasness, the writers evolved and embellished poetical picture, rather than compilation of faithful record of facts and incidents. Resultant to such condition prevailing, the works produced became kinds of hightened fairy tale with just enough background of reality, constituting thereby gratifying homage or compliment.

The vitality of the inspiration of the life and activities of Chaitanyadev being evidenced by the vast literature is found enshrined in the art activities of the Late Mediaerval Bengal which are distinctly of new aesthetic genere. The small, exquisite edifices which are extra ordinarily meticulous in ornamentation of credulous legends and luxuriously artistic descriptions freely inserted were created as outcomes of the passionate appeal of the theology, philosophy and ritualism of the Bengal Vaishnavism, which was spread widely and rapidly. The terracotta ornamentation which were the fervent expression of the devout feelings of the common people, are created in a series of mystically but gorgeously, impassioned images, forms, motifs, lyrics and panegyrics. While there was no tradition of such systematic appreciations and interpretation of historical facts, the decorative plaques, artworks and panels record contemporary impressions felt, witnessed or believed with intense faith they represent to a greater extent. It is a matter of fact that the elaborate revelations of the temple decorations were aimed at knowledge of facts. professed to bring out larger principles governing human affairs and had its leaning towards objective accuracy, as per immensely variable materials of Bengal Vaishnavas. In a number of temples constructed in the 17th and 18th Cent. AD. we find potryal of bio-graphical legends of Chaitanyadev as gratifying homage or compliment. We would be showing such instances later in this chapter.

Nevertheless, the historical literature generally protrayed the familiar and devout enumeration of the incidents of birth and allied topics in the form of praise, theological resume of the entire career of Krishna, eternal sports with the people of Vraja including erotic acts and feelings of Radha and Krishna, parental affection of Nanda and Yasoda and friendship with the gop women. The picturisation or visual transformation evidences progression and libitum of volleys of pun, simile antihesis, alliteration and other trcks with interminable heaping of icons, metaphors, epithets and conceits in enormously long panels of plaques. There is a tendency of the artists. to remain on watch for unexpected analogies and ingenious turns of expression, cultivating astoundly clever manipulation of forms and producing marvellous visual effects. A visual edifice of magnificence is conscientiously and laboriously built up.

The common representations are—

(1) Balya Lila– dealing with the childhood of Krishna and embrace incidents of his birth.

(2) Killing of Putana— lament of Yashoda and Nanda's return from Mathura.

(3) Breaking of Cart (Sakata Bhanjana) and slaying of Trinavarta.

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(4) Krishna's childish pranks, his namakarma and theophanic appearance to Yasoda.
(5) Various exploits of Dama-bandhana, Yamalarjuna-mochana.
(6) The killing of Vatsa demon, picnic and humbling of Brahma's pride.
(7) Kaisara Lila Vistara— account of adoloscence and early youth of Krishna. Purva raga of the gopis, their Kanduka Krira and the slaying of Dhenuka demon.
(8) Krishna dancing on the Kaliya Serpent.
(9) Radha's invitation to meet her and her cooking and serving of food.
(10) The beauty of the summer season, the slaying of Pralamba, charm of autumn, playing on the flute and Krishna's sport with Radha.
(11) The stealing of the garments (vastra harana) of the Gopis.
(12) Krishnas favour to the wives of the Brahman Sacrificers.
(13) Vernal festivities
(14) Lifting of Govardhana Hill.
(15) Witnessing of Brahma Loka.
(16) The Rasa sports.
(17) The stealing of Krishna's flute.
(18) The Dola festival.

The above depictions not only mark a departure from the said and elevated tradition of erotic mystic sensibility. but also characterised by their passionate and sensuous content and expression. The quasi amorous attitude of the Vaishnava Bhakti movement shifted the basis of inspiration by transforming the mighty sex impulse into an ecstatic religious emotion. By relating the devotional art very closely to the erotic, the religious longings being expressed in the intimate language and imagery of earthly passion. The apothesis of Radhakrishna legend with all its paraphernalia of impassioned beautiful sports was no doubt a literary or artistic gain of immense importance and lifted the devotional literature or art from the dead level of speculative thought to the romantic richness of internsely passionate experience.

Neverthless the spontaneous blooming of literature or art in such situation was soon encroached by the inherent tendency of the traditional scholastic traits of the subtle Institutional Brahmanism and the incubus of long established literary or artistic tradtion retraded the growth of independent form and exprssion. As a result, the norms of sanctity emanated from rhetorical nicety and pshyclological refinement came to dominate. The technical analysis and auth ority of older motifs and spirits evolved a system of meticulous classification of the ways, means and effects of the erotic sentiment and established a series of rigid conventionalists to be expressed in stock artistic and emotional idioms, analogies and conceits. In fact the Neo-Vaishnava theology and theory of sentiment brought in a further mass of well defined subletics and elegancies. It is therefore imperative that the Vaishnava litirature or art did not escape refined artificiality of sentiment and expression. It also suffered inevitable montony arising out of such themes and motifs, similar series of forms and ideas and similar method and treatment.

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B. Revitalisation of the other sectoral cults and local beliefs in the context of the artistic themes

The Bengal Vaishnavism gradually gained widespread acceptance among the common masses. The demotivated minds or souls of such masses entered into a new sphere of conciousness, where not only the generousity or truthfulness emerged as virtues, but also an effloroscence of aesthetic sense and creative faculties appeared in the social equations, as already mentioned hereinbefore.

Tantric cults, rites and rituals, continued to exist in isolation in a section of the people who contemplated freedom for themselves from the grasp of the illusory world. The philosophical and mystical significance of various images, mechanism of Yoga and faculties of senses, the state of vacuity etc, have been used in different connotation in the tantric literature both Buddhist and Brahmanical. There has always been a strong undercurrent or counter current of such trends in the folklore, which was generally considered as downright heretical by the orthodox Hindus and Buddhists.

According to distinguished scholars tantrism in fact has not added any philosophical novelty to Hinduism and Buddhism and they do not even think that it emphasises certain aspects of Mahayana and Hindu philosophy more than do the non tantric doctrines preceding it. The Hindu Tantrics of Sakta school do not add any philosophical or speculative innovation to their non tantric antecedents– but they do different things and practice different Sadhana (contemplative exercises). There is thus no difference between tantric and non tantric philosophy, as speculative electicism in pervasive, there is all the difference in the practical 'Sadhana' part of tantrism.

One of the common elements to all Indian philosophy is the notion of some absolute which underlies the Phenomenal universe. The Vedanta Brahman and the Mahayanist Sunya are the same concept, the difference being merely terminological. Further common element to both Hindu and Mahayana Philosophy is said to the 'Samanvaya' ie, the institutionalised attitude to reconciling discursively contrary notions by raising them to a level of discourse where these contradictions are thought to have no validity. It is due to Samanvaya that the gap between the phenomenal (Samvrita Vyavahara) and the absolute (Paramartha) truths coexisted in religious nations. The tantric had distinct features from the other Hindu and Buddhist teaching, like its systematic emphasis on the identity of the absolute (Paramartha) and the phenomenal (Vyavahara) world when filtered through the experience of Sadhana (Contemplative exercise). Tantra stresses more on Sadhana and it is in general not a philosophical doctrine. Tantra is concerned with the identity of the phenomenal and the absolute world— which was singled out by its teachers as the nucleus around which all their speculations was to resolve.

The Hindu and Buddhist tantra have some sort of doctrinary diffusion. It is of the type of universe model; reality in one, but it is to be grasped through a process of conceptual and intutive polarisaion. The poles are activity and passivity and the universe works through their interaction. The Hindu tantrics assigned the male symbol apparatus to the passive and the female to the active

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pole, whereas the Buddhists did the opposite. The Hindu assigned the knowledge principle to the passive male pole and the dynamic principle to the active female pole; the Vajrayana Buddhist did it the other way round.

The fundamental approach of the tantric philosophy has been expressed in terms of the Indian thought by H.V. Glasenapp (Tantrismus and Schaktismus VI, 22, 1936, 120) as follows.

'The notion that the whole universe with the totality of its phenomena forms one single whole in which even the smallest has an effect upon the largest because secret threads connect the smallest item with the eternal ground of the world, this is the proper foundation of all tantric philosophy.'

The real difference between tantric and non tantric traditions is methodological. Tantra in fact is the psycho-experimental interpretation of non tantric lore, which is more value free than non tantric traditions. By psycho experimental we try to mean 'Given to experimenting with one's own mind. It does not confer ontological or existential status upon the objects of tantric's meditation. That is the reason why tantrics are not in the least perturbed by the proliferation of gods and goddesses, minor demons and demonesses and other creatures of various density and efficacity they do not attempt to reduce their number, for these are necessary anthropomorphic ways of finding out 'What is inside the mind'. The tantric entertains one or two axioms, no doubt—the absolutistic and the phnomenal- noumenal-identity axioms, but they are not really important except as speculative constructs. All tantrics flout traditional exoteric orthodoxy, all put experiment above conventional morality denying ultimate importance to moral considerations which is not contradicted by the fact that most tantric texts pay initial homage to conventional conceptions of morality and all agree that their specific method is dangerous, and radical and all claim that it is a shortcut to liberation.

B. Bhattacharya interpreted 'Sunya' and the contemplation of it exactly like Brahman of the Advaita monist. He referred to the meditative process of the Madhyamika as securing oneness with the Sunya or infinite spirit. The main doctrine of Vajrajana theology is essencelessness in the true Buddhist sense. It is also revealed that there had been elements of Advaita monistic doctrine in Mahayana Buddhism. The analogy of Hindu Tantric dictum 'Siva' is a corpse without Shakti (Sivah Saktivihinah Savah) provides an important role for Hindu Tantric iconography.

The identification of Buddhist and Hindu tantric doctrine as far as practicable, should be followed as it is evident that Buddhist Tantrism has borrowed many of its lesser deities from Hinduism or at least from the large stock of deities present in areas which nurtured Hindu, Buddhist and aboriginal Indian mythology.

It is observed that the Mahayana doctrine of Buddhism is sometimes explained is terms of Vedantic notion and it is also found in this mediaeval Hindu Tantric texts that the Vajrayana was also assimilated into a Hindu frame. In brief, there is no tantric philosophy apart from Hindu or Buddhist philosophy, or to be more specific from Vedantic and Mahayana thought.

The first tantric teachers, such as eighty four 'Siddhas' were mostly rustic folks without much liking for and no pretence to learning. They were constantly exposed to Hindu village parlance

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around them and popular Hinduism was hardly distinguishable from popular Buddhism in early mediaeval Bengal. Their more learned commentators in turn used learned non Buddhist vocabulary to denote Buddhist concepts in concious analogy, perhaps to their unsophisticated perceptors' use of upsophisticated non Buddhist vocabulary. The naive perceptors had entertained sophisticated theological ideas and the learned commentators choose to put the same into naive language for the benefit of the crowd.

The Buddhist tantrics, and to a certain degree the Hindu tantrics offer an interesting exception in a way. The Buddha may not have been counted among the learned of his day, but he was certainly a sophisticated speaker and a good exegate of his own doctrine. The eighty four Siddhas however were naive in the sense and it was only their commentators who caught up with exegetical discursiveness. Similarly the seers of the Upanishad certainly used more sophisticated terminology than the mediaeval Hindu Saints (Kabir, Nanak, Tulishidas) who accepted upanished as Sruti.

Many Indian and Europian, particularly German Scholars have established or inaugurated a trend pointing out essential oneness of Buddhism and Hinduism. The German scholars in particular propounded the doctrine of a basic oneness of Indian religions long ago. The late Prof. W. Koppers said in a lecture at the University of Vienna in March '1948 'Whatever doctrinary differences, you will be amazed at the oneness in essentials, of Buddhism and Hinduism Mahayana Buddhism and Vedanta Hindu-Hinduism are one and the same anyway, but you will see that even Hinayana Buddhism bears the same marks. And there is a small wonder about that for after all, truth can only be one and religions are great when they approach this oneness."

The Keyterm of Mediaeval Bengal tantric Buddhism to which Indian authors like S. B. Dasgupta refer to a 'Vajrayana' or 'Sahajayana'; 'Sahaja'. It means 'Congenital', ie, the method is natural, and 'easy' in this sense, easy being the derived meaning of Sahaja in a more technical sense, 'Sahaja' is synonymous with Sunya i,e, that which is the lasting aspect of the universe.'

Now questions arise what ultimately is the final target of Tantric Sadhana and of the tantric life and whether it is the so called freedom from misery of attachment. For Mahayana Buddhism and Vajrayana Buddhism the Samsara and Nirvana are inextricably one. It is claimed by a section of scholars that Hindu Tantra surreptitiously shared the sentiment with Mahayana and much of psychological analysis. The scholars have further dervied some elements of logic to show that this basic tenet of Mahayana Buddhism has been taken over consciously or otherwise by the Hindu Tantrics who would have to continue making a specutalive distinction between the worldly and the spiritual, Samsara and Mukti, the phenomenal (Vyahara) and the absolute (Paramartha).

The method of Tantrism is more radical than that of any other system and the immediate aim of the tantric ritual is to achieve enatasy. Enatasy connotes the various experiences described in the contemplatire traditions of India like Samadhi, Kaivalya etc. which perhaps correspond to such terms like Bhavana or Antarbhavana— which are not pejorative but are almost totally colourless. In brief enatasy is non discursive, quasi permanent condition of the individual agent and is highly euphoric. It is tantamount with insight or wisdom and all other knowledge attained

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by discursive processes is thought to be vastly inferior. Formal learning of any kind is by implication essentially opposed to enatasy marring its voluntary repetition and intesification.

The Hindu Tantrics or the radical Saktas make Devi Supreme deity and assert that without cooperation of the goddess, the absolute Brahman of itself can achieve nothing. The Sakti may be conceived to be personification of universal energy in the abstract. She resides in the macrocosm as well as in the microcosm. The discovery and development of Shakti or psychic energy in man is the aim of the Mantra Sastras. The Sakti which resides in man and the development of which is one of the aims of the Yoga Sastra, is called the Kundalini Sakti. The place where it resides is called Muladhara, and is understood to be at the lower extremity of the spinal cord. By a successful development and working of the Shakti at Muladhara even the attainment of Moksha or the liberation of the soul is believed to become possible. In the ordinary condition the Kundalini Sakti is latent and sleeps quietly at the Muladhara. The Yogic aspirant or tantric may first awaken the sleeping faculty in two ways that is, either by was of 'Pranayamas' or by means of 'Mantras'. Of these, the former process consists its the regulation and the holding of breath for certain definite period of time. The second process requires the aspirants to be initiated in certain Mantras or incantations which has to repeat a fixed number of times at certain hours of the day, keeping all the while before his mental vision the image associated with the Mantra. When thus roused up, the Kundalini ascends from Muladhara to the next higher center of Svadhisthana; thence the centres Manipura and Anahata, in the later of which the psychic Sakti is transformed into sound; then to the centre Visuddhi where it becomes Sattvik and then at last to the Centre Ajna, where the Sakti becomes manifest in the form of a flash of light.

By repeatedly practising the process of holding the breath and controlling it, one may be enabled to enjoy this divine light perpetually, and thus be in union with divinity itself. The practice of holding the breath and controlling it for the purpose of rousing the Kundalini shakti possibly brings into active play some latent power residing in the several parts of the spinal cord of the human being which has not been as yet examined.

It is worthmentioning that Devi is worshipped independently as the supreme deity under the name of Shakti in Shaktism, more meticulously in tantrism and that she is also worrshipped in association with Siva in Saivaim and Vishnu in Vaishnavism. Shaktism is therefore considered to be more akin to Saivism than to Vaishnavism. The characterstics of Devi as an independent Goddess and her puranic associations may be noticed to have somewhat marked relations to the cult of Siva worship.

Maheswara is a synonym of Siva and as per Kularnava Tantra II, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva come forth from the union of Maheshwara and the Devi. Tantric ideology and much of Hindu non tantric ideology do not see a contradiction in such statement for these are pronouncements on two levels which do not conflict. For the tantric, the union of Siva and Shakti is Parmarthika. It means that the same is belonging to the realm of absolutes non dual existence, whereas the great world gods belong to the phenomenal realm. In other words the absolute Siva Shakti principle emanates or projects the total of all phenomenal things and persons and that includes the gods

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with Siva. Prof. P.C. Bagchi (p-45. Studies in the tantras-Calcutta 1975) has broadly divided the tantras into two classes orthodox and heterodox. The orthodox tantras are mainly represented by the Agamas, the Yamdas and their supplements. The heterodox tantras are both Buddhist and Brahmanical and are represented by the text of the number of tantric schools like Kulachara. Vamachara, Sahajayana, Vajrayana etc.

The tantric literature indicates that various mystic practices of foreign origin crept into the heterodox class of Indian Tantra at a very early date. At the same time Dr. B. Bhattacharya observed that the origin of tantra lies in Magic in ancient India. Later the interpretation of Vajrayana doctrine also reveals many common, relevant and significant findings as per his statements. The very opening chapter of Vajra kulapatala contains description of 32 nadies (arteries) of which three are principal, viz, Lalana, Rasana and Avadhuti, which correspond to Ida pingala and Susumna of the Hindu Hathyogins. 'Prajna' is an active force when Lalana is purified and Prajnaparamita is said to existing in the forms of Lalana as per Buddhist myths. The Brahmanadi Kulotpanna mudra as mentioned in the mystic texts also follows that five mudras originating from Kulas begining with Brahmana are respectively— Brahmani = Tathagata, Chandali = Ratna, Dombi = Vajra, Rajaki = Karma and Nati = Padma. The doctrines of mystic schools have been interpreted by various scholars in different directions and the tantric culture having the efficacy of Mantra with its own traditions remained partially unintelligible to common people, because only the teachers (Gurus) were in possession of the secrets.

The Buddhist and Brahmanical sadhanmala have analogical explanations contributory to each other with regard to mystic elements. The Mudras are of five classes as per Chienese texts which are causes of emancipation. They are called Mudras because they are the secret of the Vajra, Padma, Karma, Tathagata and Ratna.

There are aspersious of obscenities to the practices of the tantrics in certain corners of the public life. It is not deniable that the attributions of the same is supported by certain unacceptable and derogatory acts committed by the tantrics thereby projecting an image of immorality. In fact their very oldest traditions do not allow any room for such beliefs, but it cannot also be inferred that they used to preserve a pure standard by morality and that in later times their followers did also indulge in licence by wrong interpretation of their tenets.

At the later phase of Buddhism, there was a profusion of god and goddesses in the Buddhist pantheon. The efficacy and sanctity of Mantras not only endowed them with potential divinity but also got deified together with the relevant iconographic specifications. In the continuous process of deification by turning all objects and subjects within human comprehension into divine concepts, generated a number of variations originating out of individual and group preferences. The historical and socio psychological aspects of various myths and symbols connected with the Buddhist as well as hindu iconography have been discussed by various eminent anthorities including Waddell, Conze, Shastri, Mallman, Foucher, Bhattacharya, Getty, B.N. Mukherjee, Gopinath Rao, and many others. Neverthless the Tibetan and Chinese imports of rilualistic texts and iconographic informations corroborated by the local prescriptions have revealed enormous intricacies which are still awaiting critical assesment.

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The multiplicity of the iconography of Buddhist Gods and Goddesses from the initial stages of Bodhisattvas— Avolokiteswara and Manjusri to the later development of diverse iconographic concepts belonging to a number of subsects having ideological differences reflected in their iconographic injunctions, is a bare reality on record, which finds its root in regional predilection and social background tainted by Brahimanical shadows.

Buddhist tantras like Kalachakra Tantra, Krishnayamari tantra, Hevajra Tantra are stated to be basically concerned with Magico philosophic aspects of devotion and are a good repository of the descriptions of a number of iconographic forms of the same deity visualised in different contexts. Coomerswamy rightly pointed out that there is hardly any conceptual element in Buddhist imagery that cannot be traced out from earlier sources. In fact, the concepts of several Buddhist divinities and even many of their iconographic formulations are to be found sometimes in nascent form in the art and thought of other faiths including Brahmanism. All similarities and the elements of mutual dependence and borrowings traceable from the texts as well as objects of art belonging to the various faiths were emanated out of socio-economic as well as political exigencies.

It is evident that there are interesting similarities existing between the Brahmanical concept of Chandi or Devi and Buddhist concept of Tara in general, and Mahamaya-Vijaya-Vahini aspect of the goddess in particular. In the Devi Mahamaya section of Markandaya Purana, we find that the presiding deities for the first, second (middle) and last parts (carita) are Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati respectively. It is interesting to note that the Buddhist goddess Tara has also these three principal aspects known respectively as Ugratara or Mahacinakramatara, Vasudhara and Prajnaparamita. Purana characterises Devi as the great Saviour, who is prayed for immunity aganist all natural or man made calamities and disasters, while the Buddhist goddess Tara is also assigned these characterstics in her Astamahabhaya aspects as pointed out by J.N. Banerjee (Development of Hindu Iconography p-492). The Devi Mahamaya section of Markandeya Purana also mentions that the goddess will also incarnate herself to kill the enemies of gods as and when Danavas or Asuras will cause obstacles and distress to them. The Buddhists also assigned goddess Tara an almost similar concept as is evident from the Dharani Samgraha, in which it has been claimed that the goddess Tara appears as the saviour of the world whenever the people are in distress caused by Yakshas and Rakshasas. Markendeya Purana also envisages characterstics of devi described likewise devouring the forces of the enemies.

Dr. P.C. Bagchi mentioned about Ekjuktasadhana, which is said to have been recovered from Tibet. There are six sadhanas devoted to the goddess Ekjukta which closely agree with that of Mahacinakramatara. (p-41. of the Studies in Tantra P.C. Bagchi) Corresponding to the these goddess we find in Hindu pantheon not only Tara as supposed by Dr. B. Bhattacharya but also Ugratara, of whom the worship was intorduced by Vasista and hence the same as (Mahacina kramatara) Ekjukta and Mahanilasaraswati. The dhyana of Tara quoted by Dr. Bhattacharya is the same of Nilasaraswati as stated in Phetkari Tantrasar. The mode of worship of Cinatara and Ekjukta is essentially the same and so far Nilasaraswati also.

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The Tantrasara quotes from a member of authorites to explain the goddess described before Nilasarawati is Pancaksari Vidya, she is Ekjukta while she is seperated from Tara, she is Nilasaraswati while in union with Tara and she is Ugratara while she is a Vidya of three letters. The presiding goddess of other Vidyas is Ekjukta, because Ekjukta is her very nature.

Hindu Tantras considered Ekjukta, Nilasaraswati and Ugratara as different aspects of the same goddess. Buddhist Tantras do not speak of Nilasaraswati but mentions Mahacinakramatara instead. Both Ekjukta and Mahacinakramatara are of foreign importation. The Hindu Tantras have all preserved the tradition. In Nilatantra Nila sarasvati is called Sarvabhasamayi— possessor of all languages. In fact, Mahacinatara was incorporated into Hinduism from the Buddhist Tantras Both the traditional cults of Nilatara and Ugratra here are Hindu and Buddhist.

The magnificient iconic forms of the godesses had variation in the number of heads and arms, and oppositely the attributes. The concepts as well as complicated rituals and secret doctrines of religions were never condensed so as to bring out a true chronology of iconography characterstic of any particular faith in general without sectoral deviations. This is a tremendous potential task, which the fulure researchers should undertake for establishing an acceptable chronology of the treasury of images and image worship. Nevertheless in the present state of our knowledge, we have the reason to presume that there had been more similarity than disimilarity in the conceptual formation and worship of Devis in both Buddhist and Hindu beliefs and the Tantra played pivotal role in the mysticism, elucidation and cononical interpretation of the spirits underlying the images of the goddeses.

The goddess Durga or Chandi is characterised as the supreme female energy (Sakti) as per Hindu Belief and Tara occupies the same position to the Buddhism. The name Sabari and even Parna Sabari is found among the numerous names of Durga, while Parnasabari is also the name of a form of the Buddhist Goddess Tara. As per puranic texts Parnasabari means a Sabara woman clad in tree leaves or parna and the form was assumed by Goddess Parvati or Durga in order to entice Lord Siva out of his unswerving celebacy.

It is found that people often make the images of gods and goddesses in their own image and so the infiltration of racial or tribal characterstics in building up of the imagery is a common phenomeon traced out in the available specimens. The Sabaras therefore while making the image of goddess Durga or Chandi for their own worship would represent the goddess as wearing the leaves in conformity with their own racial characterstic, Neverthless the worship by Sabaras at one time might be appreciated by orthodox Brahmans, which led to introduction of Durgapuja as a ceremony in Keeping with the Sabarotsava (the ceremony of the Sabaras)

The Vajrayana Buddhists in order to ensure greater acceptibility of their religion extracted all possible inconic concepts from any explorable source and incorported the same into their own pantheon. The Parna Sabari form of Durga was popular with the aboriginal peoples like Sabaras, Babaras, Pulindas, Kiratas etc who were considered as outcasts by orthodox Brahmans. Formal recognition of such popular concepts as Parnasabari form of Tara the supreme goddess of Buddhism however expanded the sphere of Vajrayana and Tantrayana form of Buddhist worship

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among the much neglected section of the society. The Buddhist even referred certain sects of people like Chandalas, Pashupatas and Kapalikas who were despised by Brahmans, in the form of Grahas evidently to expand the belief of tantric Buddhism.

The leaf clothed form of Durga was also popular among the Kiratas who were primarily non Aryan Tribes, referring to the goddess an Parna Kairati. But the Buddhists preferred the name Parna Sabari evidently to give more importance to Sabaras than to Kiratas. The type of the image of Parnasabari further indicates that the Buddhists might have taken up the earlier tribal rites and rituals connected with the worship of goddess into their own pantheon, also. The Buddhists also took up the solar concept of Chandi most probably form her Sauri Chaturakshari concept which represents the idology of syncretism between the cults of the Saktas and the Sauras and converted into their goddess concept of Marici (Bhavisya Purana 7th Kalpa, and Dore-Researches into Chinese superstitions Tr. by M Kennely vol.-VII)

The conspicuous iconographic features of Marichi is her sow face and a chariot drawn by seven pigs which sometimes also are substituted by seven horses. There are differences in the number of arms, faces and also the number of pigs, horses from case to case. Marichi is also repeatedly invoked as Varahi. The Buddhists applied a similar treatment to the concept of Saktiganapati of Brahmanism through conversion of the same into the goddess Ganapati Hridaya (Dharmakosa Samgraha MS No. G 0055, fol-43A)

No definite chronological sequence can be ascribed to many such images belonging to various forms and although they are not of the same provenance, they are probably the representatives of the survival of the different stages of evolution of the images with particular reference to their association with the animal divinites with their inconography.

The goddess of wealth in Buddhist pantheon is Vasudhara, a form of goddess Tara. Iconography shows that she holds in her hands Dhanyamanjari,Ratnamanjari, Bhadraghata and exhibiting one hand in Varada pose. The image has strong affinity to that of Goddess Lakshmi in the Brahmanical pantheon. Vasudhara has yet another aspect of being the goddess of learning and knowledge as well and sometimes also invoked as an embodiment of knowledge. She is then called Prajanaparamita, Vidyadanesvaresvari, Saraswati etc. In such a form the goddess is shown holding a book in her hand. Such iconographic and ideological forms have strong similarity with the Saraswati the Brahmanical goddess of learning. The concept and ideology underlying the image of Vasudhara therefore is the combination of ideals and concepts of Lakshmi and Saraswati as per Brahmanical pantheon.

It has been observed by eminent authorities that various ideologies and iconographic formulations relating to the supreme female energy (Sakti) as per Brahmanical Pantheon. served as a veritable repertorie to derive the ingredients for the formulation of the concept and iconography of goddess Tara of the Buddhist pantheon. The concepts of both the goddess is found to be sourced from a common heritage, having recognised the primordial character of the supreme goddess.

During mediaeval period Bengal emerged as a principal centre of the tantric cult of Sakta worship. J. N. Banerjee in his Dacca History of Bengal, Vol-1 (chapter 13th) has dealt with various

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historical evidences in the form of numerous sculptures excavated from various architectural sites, supporting such views. The spirit and mystic spells of 'Sakti is also manifested in the annexation of the images of the goddesses to the supreme divinities like Vasudeva Krishna and Siva for the purpose of worship. The post mediaeval phase of the image worship in Bengal witnessed effloroscence of the cult of Kali, the icons and canonical prescription of which in the present form were conceived by the Tantric saints of Bengal. It is not ascertainable at this stage whether the conceptual formation of the Goddess was derived from the Vajrayana Buddhist image of Nairatma. Nevertheless, it is not deniable that there had been strong affinities betwen the images and the worship of Kali which cannot be ascribed prior to the era of Vajrayana cult.

The image of Kali is described as devouting the evil forces representing her characterstics essentially as war goddess involved in fighting with and destroying the enemies of God and human existence. The divine incarnation causing appearance of the goddess as the saviour of the world whenever people are in distress caused by evil forces, is also evident in various tantric texts including 'Chamunda' and 'Mundamala' tantras, which are apparently composed prior to 17th Century AD as per citations of Krishnanda Agambagish in the Tantrasaras. Agambagish quoted Mahavidyas from the said Tantric texts and also seperately mentioned about 12 Mahavidyas being derived from 'Malinivijaya' yet another tantric literature. This apart there are plenty of references containing various attributes of 'Siddhavidya', 'Mahavidya', even prior to the said period— which as per opinions of distinguished scholars appear to be conceived and contributed by Tantric worshipers of Bengal.

'Jain Acharanga Sutra' (BC-300) in its description on the Rarh mentioned that Mahavir Tirthankar visited the land of Rarh. During such time, the Land was inaccessible and had dense forestry around. The Jain saints experienced extreme hardship and even the inhabitants drove the barking dogs towards them and in some cases, stoned them, indicating thereby that the Aryan civilisation could not get access to the territory till date.

Jainism was expanded in the 'Rarh' region due to its close proximity of Samet Sikhar at Pareshnath Hills in Bihar. R.D. Banerjee maintained the opinion that Jainism had its great influence in the areas of Dhanbad-Barakar stretched upto the state of Orissa. Enormous archaeological evidences in the form of temples and Jain images have been found in such areas and also in the territory of Purulia Singhbhum. J. D. Beglar of Archaeological Survey of India in 1872-73 could discover a number of Jain antiquities in the western Rarh region and also traced out certain ancient routes connecting various important trade and cultural poleis. It is therefore believed that Buddhism and Jainism expanded in Bengal through trade connection via the said route.

The revival of Brahmanism at the later Pala and Sen empires caused prejudices to theBuddhism and Jainism. The loss sustained by Buddhists was comparatively less in so far as the Pala empire had great affinity towards Buddhism. But Jainism did not have any such patronge or support of the royalty. Nevertheless Jainism continued to exist in far flung Rarh region where the stronghold of administration did not have any reach, till the end of eighth/ninth Century AD. The opinion is also supported by R.D. Banerjee.

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It is however interesting to note that the Jain temples and Jain images pertaining to the period later than 16th Century AD were found in the western Rarh region and there are adequate reasons to believe that the religion had a deep access to the contemporary local socio cultural traits.

The images of Jain Trithankara and Parshanath available on sporadic basis at several places indicate that it had once its own spatial existence, which might have been subdued or subordinated through interruptions of the Brahmanism from time to time. In the north western part of the district of Bankura, on the foothills of Biharinath, Sri Amiya Bandopadhyay visited a spot where he found deformed sculpture of Jain Tirthankar with an umbrella of snakes and a peculiar 12 armed image having a surprising combination of the images of Jain Tirthankara and Brahmanical Vishnu. The spot is 2/3 Kms distant from the river Damodara and Bandopadhyay is of the opinion that the particular spot is an example of conversion of Jain temple into a Hindu Temple. The 'Nangto Shyamchander Mandir' of at Dharapat near Bishnupur, Bankura stands to be erected sometimes around 1603 AD, is found to have large sized sculptures of two Jain Tirthankara images and an image of four armed Vishnu with its attributes placed on the outer faces of the walls of a Pancharatha Rekha deul. This is a very peculiar combination and there is enough scope to believe that it may be a purported case of conversion of the identity of the temple on a later date with the superimposition of some external characters. We could further find at a nearby site, an image of Jain Tirthankara in Kayotsarga posture standing beneath the umbrella of seven snakes, converted apparently into a Vishnu image, but now being worshiped as Devi Manasa.

The Siddheswar Siva Temple of Bahulara (Bankura) which in the opinion of S.K. Saraswati is one of the best representative architectural edifices in the Indian subcontinent of the 10th/11th Century AD, also possess certain dualities on the origin thereof. In the garbhagriha of the temple, we find existence of one sculpture of Parasanath besides the images of Ganesa and Durga, though at present it is considered as Siva temple. At the present moment, it is difficult to ascertain the actual identity of the temple particularly in the context of discovery of small votive stupas from the adjacent mound/debris— which are akin to similar such stupas identified as Jain stupas at Kankalitala near Mathura.

Though there had been discovery of several Jain images in the Rarh region of Bengal, the number of deities relating to Brahmanical cult is also abundant. Many of such images pertain to a period earlier to 10th Century AD. R. D. Banerjee ascribed the dancing Siva image available from village Kantore, PS. Patrasayer, to a period earlier than 9th century. The Hrishikesh Vishnu image available from the village Sarengarh, PS. Ranibandh, now being kept at Indian Museum has been ascribed to 9th Century AD.

The contemporary Rekha deuls of Orrisa are exclusively Saiva temples. The image of the god Lakulish appearing on the entry gate of the 4th temple at Barakar, Begunia is very significant in this context. Neverthless, it is worthmentioning that Rekha Temples are primarily known as Siva temples in popular parlance.

In the Indian context, there are several archaeological sites where we find co existence of Brahmanical and Jain temples or images. Precedents of disputes or struggle between various

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beliefs or sects and even within the same sect of belief are quite usual, nevertheless the elements of mutual cohesion and solidarity within such religions sects are rather more visible than the elements of the purported disputes. The coexistence of the beliefs of Brahmanism and Jainism can also be traced out in the temples of Orissa, Khajuraho and even Ellora. We find at the Udaigiri caves near Sanchi of Madhyapradesh the combined depiction of Saiva-Sakta-Vaisnava images, besides the image of Jain Tirthankara in Meditation pose in one of the caves. We have already mentioned about co-existence of such images in Bengal particulars in Rarh region. Sri Chittaranjan Dasgupta has also referred to several such precedents in this direction. At Gokulnagar near Salda of Bankura, Sri Dasgupta observed existence of the image of Jain Tirthankara Neminath (now being preserved at Acharya Jogesh chandra Purakirti Bhavan at Bishnupur) besides the image of Anantasayi Vishnu at Gokulchand Temple. He further observed peaceful co-existence of Saiva-Sakta images and life sized Tirthankar images at the famous archaeological site of Sarenggarh (Since abolished) beneath the reservoir of Kangshabati— Kumari rivers. In the district of Purulia, we further find such co-existence of Jain and Vaishnava images near Isri river at Bhajuri. A life sized Tirthankar image has been co-habitating with a Vishnu image at Pakbikra, Purulia, besides a tower displaying a heroic image carried by a lion. In the Shyama Roy temple at Bishnupur, we also find potraiture of ascetics including the image of Digambar Jain Tirthankara. Moreso, we also find such spirit of cohesion, mutual understanding and co-existence of the different such sects and beliefs. Lord Buddha has been considered as an incarnation of Vishnu. A section of scholars is in the opinion that the Lokeshwar Vishnu images are the combination of Buddhist and Vaishnava beliefs. R. D. Banerjee also maintained the opinion that "the particular class of specimens therefore indicates a blending of the older Bhagavata class of Vaishnava images and the Lokeswara of the later Mahayana school of Buddhism" (EIS MS Page-96). It is therefore evident that the way by which Harihara emerged with the blending of Buddhist and Vaishnava sects, becomes applicable to the emergence of Lokeswara Siva as well as Lokeshwara Vishnu through the blending of Mahayana Buddhists, and Saivas vis-a-vis Mahayana Buddhists and Vaishnavas, respectively. According to Benoy Ghosh such images were the outfits of the phase of transition in support of which he further cited the Lokeshwara Vishnu image of Patun (Bardhaman) and several other such images in the territory of Bankura-Purulia-Manbhum-Sighbhum (Paschimbanger Sanskriti— Benoy Ghosh)

The Lokeswara Vishnu image with the serpent umbrella at the Ekteshwar Siva Temple of Bankura and a twelve armed Lokeswara Vishnu image with serpent umbrella at the temple at Tiluri, Bankura beneath Biharilal Hill are interesting specimens in this regard signifying the said phase. Sri Chittaranjan Dasgupta further observed at Village-Salda, Jaipur, Bankura a half bast image of Vishnu with serpent umbrella besides which a sculpture of Padmapani Avalokiteshwara was located, which is now maintained at Jogeshchandra Purakirti Bhavan, Bishnupur. Such sculptures and also the Tribhanga Surya image in Sthanak posture at Jogeshchandra Purakirti Bhavan bear the iconographic features of Mahayana Buddhism.

The economic base of feudalism during the 16th and 17th Century AD in Bengal was exposed to acute contradication developed through increased distance between production forces and

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feudal economic administration. The rural settlements were based upon non antagonistic social divisions marked by rigid caste system though the socially advanced classes had the privilege to enjoy the loyalty and submission of the backward castes in so far as their social standing was concerned. The villages had certain distinct heritage of mythology and customs respected by each and every member. The heritage of community cult, magical practices, superstitions, rituals which were inherent as well as behavioural.

The elements of Islamic spirituality— could not however ultimately ignore the cultural achievements of the people on the soils of the country despite achieving the political victory with the propagated objective of the expansion of Islamic brotherhood. Indiscriminate iconoclasm, interdiction of pictorial art and a cultural apartheid existed between the dominating imperial class and the strong traditional orthodoxy, which in fact, destabilised the superstructure of social institution, without affecting much the intensity of the communal passion existed at the dignified bottomline of the rural hierarchy. Loss of political power at the helm of affair, demoralisation of a vast section of people, political as well as social corruptions, infringement of civil rights, revocation and the obvious humiliation of the defeated subjects rendered the centres of power suffering from the lack of necessary equilibrium. Nevertheless the sustained creative tribal practices dedicated to the myths and fundamentals of communal worship continued to survive despite the complete switchover of the institution to an altogether a different sector of theology and spirituality.

The very low pitch of morale of the confused and demotivated non muslim subjects accepted the radicalism of Vaishnava mysticism as an intellectual shelter in an atmosphere of perverse and cowardice materialism based upon ultimate belief of destiny and rebirth. The regeneration and revival of the morale of the people under the spiritual leadership of Chaitanyadev with the mitigation of the hostalitises of the rulers, created a different sphere of purified or platonic romanticism, purification of habits and rituals in daily life and truthfulness of vision against all sorts of injustice and inequality is the social fabric.

On the other hand the intensification of tantric mode of worship also became evident in isolation from the earthly realities. It was intended for individual emancipation without looking into the bottlenecks of existence due to the murky state of affairs in the social superstructure. Krishnananda Agambagish was one of the most prominent exponent of the tantric mode of worship in the 16th century who had authoritative works on the tantric practices, which made considerable impact during the relevant period.

A very strong and influential sect of public singers singing devotional songs made their presence felt on the soil of Bengal during such transitional phase. The sect cannot be identified to be totally associated to either any particular religion or caste. The believers of this particular faith used to stay secluded from others and led a peculiar mode of life in avoidance of the accepted social norms and practices. They remained indifferent to the family affairs and indulged to a seperate set of feelings and philosophy propagated through their songs. The sect was usually known as 'Baul'— who had potential depth of mystic philosophy preaching spiritualities of natural phenom-

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enon, man's destiny, the experiences of the inner soul, concerte realisation of the ends of life and the message of love, affection. fraternity and generosity among human beings.

While the origin of such sect is yet to be established beyond any shadow of doubt, it is evident that even in the days of Chaitanyadev a religious sect kept themseves away from the earthly affairs and resorted to various practices which were mysterious and ambiguous in the practical day to day life. They were also reported to be known as 'Bauls'.

In the 17th Century 'Sahajiya' tantric Buddhists-the outcasts of the Hindu community were taken back in Vaishnava society under the influence of 'Birchandra'. They were popularly known as 'Sahajiya Vaishnavas'. Neverthless they did not dispense with the process of devotion through body and mind, rather resorted to the theory of passion (passion for Radha) Parkiya (Universality of love beyond the conventional family bondage), various norms and practices of Gaurnagar mysticism as introduced by Sri Khanda community. In the process of assimilation of the conceptual and the interacting trends as well as possibilities, they devised a devotional process of their own— which continued to exist throughout the 17th to 19th century. The strong possibility of the origin and existence of the philosophy of Bauls within such community cannot be ruled out.

The Bauls had been preaching philosophy— which bears the physical devotioned elements. of Vaishnava Sahjiya belief, 'Sufi', Awalia and Sivaite 'Nath' beliefs, the Yoga, Tantra and Hathyoga beliefs etc. They do not believe in any caste barrier or bias, nevertheless the Hindu Sahajiya Bauls and Musbim Fakir Bauls (Awalia) maintained their seperate identities. But there is no hard and fast division as such. Hindu Bauls also sing Sufi devotional songs and Muslim Fakir Bauls also used physical attributes of Yoga Tantra in their songs.

All the above bears testimony to the creation of diversent sects and beliefs as well as mythologies with active intense fraternity which in fact turned the traditional village communes a homeland of creative artists bringing out their own creation in sublimity despite relentless derogatory subversions persisted in the socio economic life of contemporary Bengal.

As it is already metioned, at the initial stage of the wave of art practices through intensive ornamentation of the architectural monuments, the humble artisans had no option but to follow meticulosly the canons of the institutional religion, which though subdued with the Vaishnava radicalism, again appeared indirectly through the spirit of the theological doctrines articulated by six Vrindavana Goswami's as successors of Chaitanyadev. In the shape of such doctrines, we can find once again the shadow of dogmatic orthodoxy in its leaning towards rigid conventionalism. However from the late 18th Cent A.D. onwards the trend appears to have accommodated passions and sentiments of the common folks not only through display of secular motifs but also through allowing access of spiritualities which were not generally favoured earlier.

There are common denominators of various themes and depictions in the decorative artworks irrespective of the location of temple, the belief of the builders and spread of time in the late mediaeval Bengal. Hence to begin with, We would like to point out credulous legends, impassioned images and interpretation of mythological facts, which are broadly common before discussions on the exclusive depictions peculiar to any particular temple.

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C. Representations

1. Popular Krishna episodes

The most popular legends around the life and achievements of lord Krishna in human form, commonly known to the rank and file of the society, finding picturisation in the late mediaeval terracotta decorations of Bengal may be summerised as under.

a. Birth of Krishna : God's creation of universe was at stake with the tyranical actions of king Kamsa. The devas at the heaven sought for the intervention of Lord Brahma— who predicted that an incarnation of Lord Vishnu will be born in the womb of Debaki— sister of King Kamsa, who would terminate King Kamsa to save the creation. After coming to know about the prediction Kamsa sent her sister Debaki to prison and termintaed the babies in the womb of Debaki six times. To get rid of the wrath of Kamsa. the seventh womb of Debaki was however diverted to Rohini— who gave birth of Balabhadra (Balaram). Krishna came in the eighth womb and before the information reached Kamsa, Vasudev father of Krishna shifted the new born baby to the house of Nanda Jashoda and placed a new born girl child in the lap of Debaki. The natural calamities in the route through river Jamuna and heavy downpour of the blessings of God followed by several supernatural phenomenon celebrating the birth of the Avatara (incarnation), have been narrated in various art works. Kamsa having come to know about the seventh child of Devaki. ruthlessly killed the girl child who before her death warned Kamsa that his assasinator was growing up with the Gopas.

This is a very common image available in many of the terracotta temples of the late mediaeval Bengal. A few of such Temples having elaborate picturisation of this episode are as under.

(a) Shyama Rai Temple of Bishnupur, (Bankura).
(b) Jorabangla Temple of Bishnupur, (Bankura).
(c) Madan Mohan Temple of Bishnupur, Bankura.
(d) Janakiballav Temple, Tilantapara, Sabang (Midnapur)
(e) Jhareswar Siva Temple, Kanasole, Keshpur (Midnapur)
(f) Radhadamodar Temple — Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer. (Bankura)
(g) Vrindavanchandra Temple, Konnagar (Midnapur)
(h) Laxmijanardan Temple, Ilambazar (Birbhum)
(i) Kantaji Temple— Kantanagar Dinajpore— Bangladesh.
(k) Sandhya Temple— Putia— Rajshahi, Bangladesh

b. Krishna appears as an earthly hero but with his supernatural power conquered Varuna and Panchayama, the demons of 'Patala' and Indra to get the posession of 'Parijata' tree. His childhood divinity is commonly recognised. The dwarf form is also believed to be of child Krishna, who even as a boy did great acts. As a child he slew a bird (fiend), then he kicked over a car at a great zeal and for seven days upheld the mountain Govardhana. The slaying of the bird 'Putana' in particular is expressly ascribed to his childhood.

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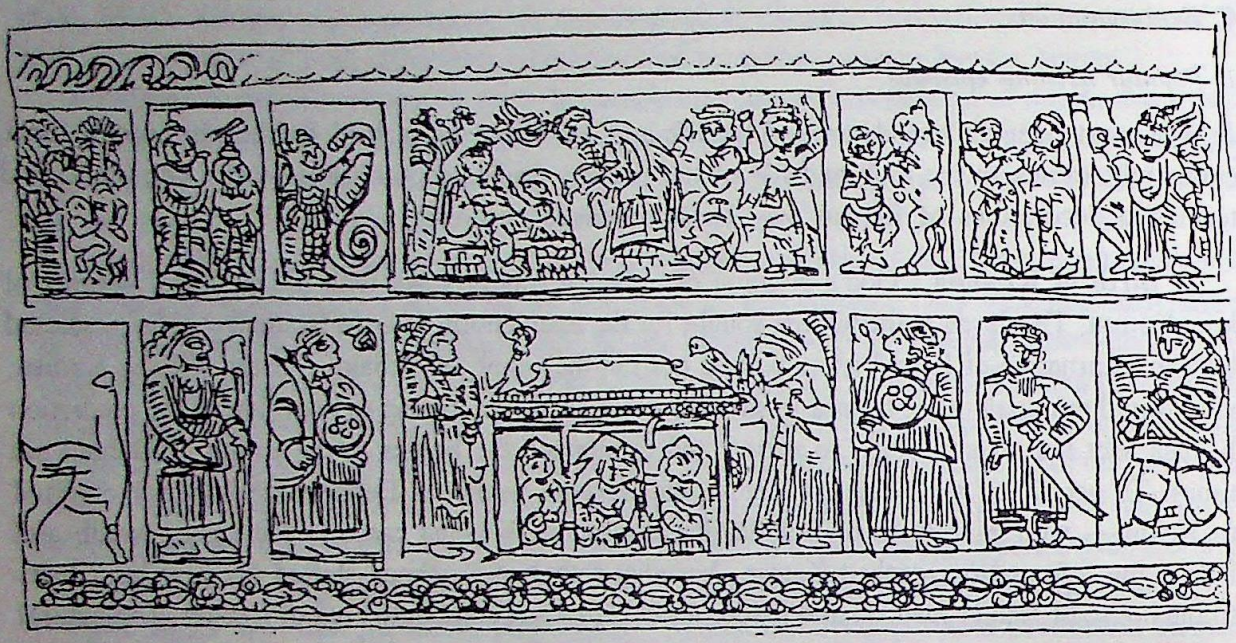

Krishna episodes and other social scenes-Kali Temple, Barnagar, Ajimgunj Murshidabad.

The images concerning the childhood of Lord Krishna have been elaborately potrayed in the terracotta decorations at innumerable temples, some of which are as under.

1) Killing of demon Putana	- Laxmijanardan Temple	Daspur (Midnapore)
	- Simhavahimi Temple	Nabagram (Ghatal)
2) Killing of Bakasura	- Laxmijanardan Temple	Debipore (Memari) (Burdwan)
	Gopinath Temple	Daspur (Midnapore)
3) Mother Joshoda churning curds	- Radhagobinda Temple	Antpur, (Hooghly)
	Gopinath Temple	Dasghara (Hooghly)
4) Child Krishna Stealing butter at home	- Gopinath Temple	Daspur (Midnapore)
	- Radhadamodar &	
	- Sitala Temple	Khirpai (Midnapore)
	- Radhadamadar	Mangloi
	Rashmancha	Shyam-ballavpur, Panskura (Midnapore)
5) Krishna lifting Mountain Govardhana	- Lakshmi Janardan Temple	Ilambazar (Birbhum)
6) Krishna raring cows	- Raghunatha Temple	Ghurisha, Ilambajar, (Birbhum)
7) Krishna's hair being dressed by mother Josada	- Radhdamodara Temple	Hadal Narayanpur (Bankura)
8) Krishna wearing anklet of bells	- Damodarjiu Temple	Dakshin Maju Jagatballavpur (Howrah)

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9)	Krishna occupying the Parijat tree	- Shyama Rai Temple	Bishnupur (Bankura)
10)	Krishna Milching cow	- Shyama Rai Temple	Bishnupur (Bankura)
11)	Krishna eating fruits half fed by his companions	- Shyama Rai Temple	Bishnupur (Bankura)
12)	Jashoda knotting up child Krishna	- Laxmi Janardan Temple	Devipore,Memari Burdwan
		Shyama Rai Temple	Bishnupur (Bankura)
13)	Childhood in details	- Madanmohan Temple	Bishnupur (Bankura)

c. During the epic war, Krishna appeared as a charrioteer of Arjuna standing at his right. He transformed weapon into a garland, concealed the sun as a strategy and cured the wounds of Arjuna performing his role as a charrioter.

When Arjuna declined to fight out his own kins and elders, he resorted to philosophy of eternity and destiny visualised and conceived by Arjuna and also exposed his divinity as creator, preserver and destroyer.

Krishna is blamed for his ignoable conduct, his unreasonable rage and broken promise in slaying Karna at one of the most tragic moments of the epic.

Though the episode pertains to Mahabharata, the tale has been popularly connected with the life and achievemants of Krishna— who was shown as an ideal of the Indian spiritual pursuits. A few of the depictions potrayed on the following temples.

(a) Shantinath Siva Temple - Mitrasenpur (Chandrakona) Midnapur.
(b) Pratapeswar Temple - Ambika Kalna, Burdwan.
(c) Bhattamati Temple - Bhattamati - Lalbagh - Murshidabad
(d) Kali Temple - Tarapith, Birbhum.
(e) Rajhunathjiu Temple - Ghurisha - Bribhum.
(f) Mathurapur Deul - Mathurapur (Baliakandi) Faridpur.

d. As human warrior Krishna waged war against various Danavas and demons to make safe road to the common people. As a boy in the cowherd family of Nanda, he slew Hayaraja and with his hands slew bull danava. He also slained other demons like Bakasura, Aghasura, Trinabartmasura, Ghotakasura, Pralambasura etc. to rescue the victims of oppression.

The tremendous pictorial qualities of the episode were exploilted by the artists exorbitently. A few of such monuments showing the picturisation is as under.

1. Killing of Bakasura - Sitala Temple -Ajuria (Panskura), Midnapore, Laxmijanardan Temple (Pal family) Daspur, Midnapore
2. Killing of Trinabartasura Ghotakasur & other demons - Janakiballav Temple -Tilantapara, (Sabang, Midnapore)
3. Killing Aghasura, Bakasura, Pralambasura, Narakasura, Jambhasura etc Jora Bangla Temple- Bishnupur Bankura, Lakshmi Janardan Temple, Daspur, Midnapore.

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Krishna in dancing posture with the gopinis-
Shyam Rai Temple— Bishnupur, Bankura.

e. In the popular mythological perceptions, Krishna in general was worshipped as divinities in different forms like Narayana , Madhava Govinda, Vishnu, Madhusudan, Trivikrama, Sri Dhara, Hrishikesh, Damodara, Padmanava etc. His dominating image of a lover god became associated with Vaishnava mysticism of Bengal and the same was a later development through syncretisation of folk legends of erotic mysticism between Lord Krishna and an unnamed Gop woman who was subsequently named as 'Radha'. Nevertheless the poetic and lyrical creativities regenerated or resurrected the age old traditions, revealed superb aesthetic images around this particular life phase of Krishna, found pictorial conversion in the terracotta decorations of late mediaeval Bengal.

(i) To render herself becoming a counterpart of Krishna an Avatar of Vishnu, goddess Lakshmi took birth in the Gopa dynasty as a daugther of Sagar and Padma. Grown up with the time, Radha turned out to be a paragon beauty comparable with the full moon as described by the poets. Her destiny premeditated by the gods, made her married to Aihan an impotent man, who engaged his aunt 'Barayee' as governess, while carrying milk curds on way for sale at Mathura. The transit of gopinis including Radha to Mathura has been clearly potrayed in the terracotta plaques at various temples, some of which are as under.

(a) Raghunathjiu Temple— Ghurisha, Birbhum.
(b) Laxmijanardan Temple— Ilambajar, Birbhum.
(c) Shyamchand Temple— Jayantipur. Chandrakona, Midnapore.
(d) Laxmijanardan Temple— Ajuria, Panskura, Midnapore.
(e) Pratapeswar Temple— Ambika Kalna, Burdwan.

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(f) Shyama Rai Temple— Bishnupur, Bankura.

(ii) Radha an innocent housewife afraid of the sins of adultery was being constantly persued by Krishna seeking erotic love, while on route from Vrindaban to Mathura for selling curds along with several other gop women daily. At the outset, Radha was reluctant to develop any such relation, while Krishna had desperate bids to look out for opportunities on some pretext or the other.

The pictorial transformation of the scene depicting Krishna pampering Radha has been found on the terracotta plaques in different temples, some of which are as under.

(a) Shayamchand Temple - Jayantipur, Chandrakona, Midnapore

(b) Madanmohan Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura.

(c) Bhubaneswar Siva Temple - Uttar Gobindapur. Daspur, Midnapore

(d) Lakshmijanardan Temple of Pala family - Daspur, Midnapore

(e) Radhadamodar Rashmancha - Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore

(iii) In such a situation, Krishna made strategical moves by disguising himself as a Dani on the bank of River Jamuna and obstructed the road to Mathura. He openly demanded gratification from Radh or in the alternative offered her to surrender physically. Radha failed to understand the motive as to why Krishna singled her out from more or less 1600 gopinis. All prayers and apologies failed to convince Krishna who had been rigid on his motive through conciliation or coercion. Radha was left with no other alternative but to surrender reluctantly to the desires of Krishna. This episode is popularly known as Danleela.

The scene depicting Krishna seeking gratification from Radha has been potrayed on the terracotta plaques of several temples, some of which are.

(a) Shyma Rai Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura.

(b) Madan Mohan Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura.

(c) Ananta Basudav Temple - Bansberia, Hooghly.

(d) Lalji Temple - Ambika Kalna, Burdwan.

(e) Bhubaneswar Siva Temple - Uttar Gobindapur, (Daspur) Midnapore

(f) Radhamadav Rashmancha - Mangloi Shyamballavpur, (Panskura), Midnapore

(iv) Owing to such eventuatilty, Radha was prohibited by her mother in law for going to Mathura to sell curds. For a long time Krishna suffered seperations which led him to resort to a further disguise as a boat sailor on the bank of river Jamuna. However in collusion with Barayee, the governess of Radha, Krishna could ensure the visit of Radha once again to Mathura for selling curds. On a particular day there was only one boat on the bank of river and that too was very small only to accommodate one passenger at a time. All the gop women accompanying Radha could cross the river leaving behind Radha herself escorted by her governess Barayee. When there had been an issue of a single passenger out of the two to cross the river first, Krishna helped Barayee first in this regard leaving Radha alone in waiting after boarding the boat, Radha could recognise the sailor as nobody else other then Krishna himself. Radha started abusing Krishna for his ulterior motive and by that time the boat became unstable and disbalanced in the middle river. Radha became terrified and got hold of Krishna in the river water who rescued her and Radha hesitatingly admitted her deep gratitude to Krishna for saving her life. In the process

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the loss of curds caused to Radha was made good by other woman. This part of the episode is popularly known as Nauka Vilash.

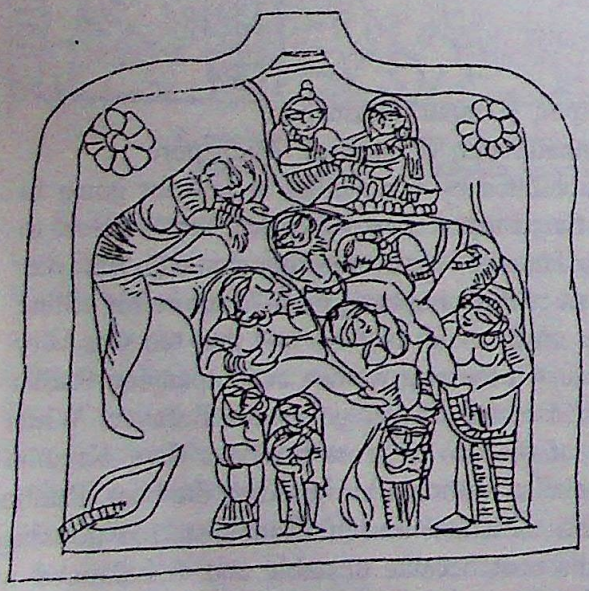
In fact this episode appears to be the most popular one finding depiction on the terracotta temples of the late mediaeval Bengal. There are a very few monuments where this particular plaque is found absent. However a few of such temples are as under.

(a) Radhakrishna & Damodar Temple - Anandapur, Midnapore
(b) Jhareswar Temple - Kanasole (Keshpur), Midnapore
(c) Lakshmi Janardan Temple - Ghoshpur (Keshpur), Midnapore
(d) Rashmancha - Hadal Narayanpur. Patrasayar, Bankura.
(e) Jorbangala Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura
(f) Madan Mohan Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura
(g) Lakshmi Janardan Temple - Daspur, Midnapore
(h) Bhattamati Temple - Bhattamati, Murshidabad
(i) Sandhya Temple - Putia, Rajshahi
(j) Rudreswar Siva Temple - Matiari, Krishnaganj, Nadia.

(v) Yet on another occassion Krishna took the guise of a porter on the bank of river Jamuna. On her way to Mathura, Radha became tired of carrying the containers of curds and wanted to hire a porter. Krishna himself fell in jeopardy having voluntered to become a porter. There had been much of altercations and sentimental expressions in reality of such jobs by Krishna, who demanded an association with Radha as wages, which she agreed. This part of the episode is known as 'Bharkhanda'.

This potrayal of the episode is not commonly found but sparingly found on few occassions on certain temple decorations, some of which are as under.

(a) Raghunathjiu Temple - Ghurisha, Birbhum
(b) Shyamrai Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura.
(c) Lakshmi Janardan Temple - Ilambajar, Birbhum
(d) Kantaji Temple - Kantanagar, Dinajpur.
(e) Jorabangla Temple - Brishnupur, Bankura.



Nava NariKurajara-Madan Mohan Temple Bishnupur, Bankura

(vi) With such extra marital affairs continuing, the in-laws of Radha imposed several restrictions on her movement to Mathura. Krishna met Radha in secret and invited her to the beautiful garden of Vrindabana which he himself constructed for Radha's pleasure. The garden was profusely decorated with floras and faunas containing divergent varieties of beautiful flowers and fruits. On her way to Mathura, Radha and her companions entered into the garden. Being amazed with the distinct beauty they started plucking flowers and fruits. The gop companions of Radha fell in love

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Krishna engaged in water games- Jora Bangla Temple-Bishnupur.

with Krishna who was compelled to take several forms to satisfy them. Immediately thereafter when Krishna came to Radha, he was refused for such earlier acts with her gop companions. On the other hand, Krishna demanded compensation for the loss of flowers and fruits for which Radha tried to plead her innocence. Nevertheless the issue was resolved with the conjugal union of Radha-Krishna putting thereby the end of the episode called Vrindaban Leela. The Vrindaban garden scenes with depictions of Krishna loitering in the garden, Krishna playing his magical flute in the garden and the joint dancing postures in the garden etc have been elaborately depicted in the terracotta plaques of a large number of temples, some of which are as under.

(a) Jor Bangla Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura.
(b) Shyamrai Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura.
(c) Madan Mohan Temple - Bishnupur Bankura.
(d) Baradi Terracotta Math - Baradihat, Kusthia, Bangladesh.
(e) Charchala Temple - Rainagar, Magura Jessore, Bangladesh.
(f) Jor Bangla Temple - Lohagara, Jessore.
(g) Lakshmijanardan Temple - Ilambazar Birbhum.
(h) Ananta Vasudev Temple - Bansberia, Hooghly.
(i) Radha Gobinda Temple - Dihibaliharpur Daspur, Midnapore.
(j) Radhakrishna & Damodar Temple - Anandapur, Midnapore.
(k) Jharesnar Temple - Kanasole, Keshpur, Midnapore.
(l) Rudreshwar Siva Temple - Matiari Krishnaganj Nadia.

(vii) River Jamuna was flowing accross Vrindaban and a portion thereof named Kalidaha was vitiated with the venom of snake Kaliya who used to stay there alongwith his family. The water of Kalidaha became unfit for human consumption and people used to maintain safe distance from the portion of the river. Krishna one day wanted to have a pleasure dip into the river. On the

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Dancing Krishna with a devotee companion-Shyam Rai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura.

bank of the river there was a 'Kadamba' tree where-from Krishna jumped into the river. All other cowboys became extremely afraid of the consequences and being freightened, called Nanda-Jashoda alongwith their neighbours including Radha who started repenting deeply for such eventuality. Krishna's brother Balaram apprehended that Krishna had been carried away by illusion having forgot himself under the influence of the venom of serpent kaliya and keeping the same in mind he started recite 'Dasabatar stotra' (prayers to the incarnation of Lord Vishnu) Just at the moment, everybody present was surprised to witness that Krishna raising himself over the river started beating up and dancing over the head of Snake Kaliya. Snake Kaliya's wife started worshiping Krishna and prayed for her husband's life. Being satisfied with the worship, Krishna condoned snake kalia. but exiled them to the southern sea. This is treated as a divine act through which Krishna made it possible to make available the water of Kaliadaha for human consumption.

The tremendous pictorial prospect of the episode has been skillfully exploited by the artists, who depicted the same on terracotta plaques of innumerable temples of the late medieval Bengal, a few of which are as under.

(a) Jora Bangla Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura.
(b) Raghunathjui Temple - Ghurisha, Birbhum
(c) Gopinath Temple - Daspur, Midnapore.
(d) Kantaji Temple - Kantanagar, Dinajpore, Bangladesh.
(e) Siva Temple - Balsi, Patrasayar. Bankura.
(f) Jora Bangla Temple - Salnagar Lohagora. Jessore.
(g) Ek Bangla Temple - Kaichhal, Faridpur, Bangladesh.
(h) Ananta Basudeb Temple - Bansberia, Hooghly
(g) Jhareswar Temple - Kanasole, Midnapore
(i) Raghaveshwara Siva Temple - Dignagar, Nadia.

(vii) One day Radha and her companions went to Kalidaha for bringing drinking water, where Krishna was found waiting for them. Radha behaved as if Krishna was unknown to her. Nevertheless Krishna persued her with all passions to which she finally responded. Krishna and all the Gop women came down to the rivers to have a water game. But sometimes thereafter Krishna took a dip and was non tracealde on the surface. All the Gop women started repenting and they decided to come back in the next morning to have a further search.

After the Gop women left Krishna raised himself from the river and spent the night at Vrindabana.

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Krishna Playing his magic flute - Shyam Rai Temple -Bishnupur, Bankura

Balaram-Shyam Rai Tample Bishnupur, Bakura.

Next morning when all the Gop women came in search of Krishna and left their clothes on the bank before going down the river on the presumption that nobody else must be anywhere in the morning hours, Krishna at that time was hiding himself in a 'Kadamba' tree on the bank of the river and surreptitously took away the clothes left by such women before climbing the tree once again. When the Gop women could not trace out their clothes and found Krishna as the miscreant, they prayed humbly for return of the clothes which Krishna did after taking them to task. The episode is popularly known as Bastraharana.

This is a very common motif available on terracotta plaques of a very large number of late mediaeval Bengal temples. A few of such temples are as under.

(a) Damodar Temple - Bhattagram, Goaltore, Midnapore
(b) Raghunath Temple - Dandipur, Ghatal, Midnapore
(c) Radhavinod Temple - Purbagopalpur, Panskura, Midnapore
(d) Madanmohan Temple - Garbeta, Midnapore
(e) Bhubaneswar Siva Temple - Uttargobindapur, Daspur, Midnapore
(f) Radhadamodar Temple - Dalapatipur, Kharor, Midnapore
(g) Shyam Sundar Jiu Temple - Madhyapara, Jhikhira, Howrah
(h) Madan Mohan Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura.
(i) Jor Bangla Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura
(j) Ananta Vasudeb Temple - Bansbaria, Hooghly
(k) Kapileshwar Siva Temple - Taras, Pabna, Bangladesh.
(l) Kantaji Temple - Kantanagar, Dinajpore, Bangladesh
(m) Raghabeswara Siva Temple - Dignagar, Nadia.

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(ix) There are several other episodes potraying the pleasures, pathos sensualities, emotions, ecstasies and tremendous passion underlying the amorous as well as sentimental affairs including the agonies of seperation and alienation. Krishna as a cowboy raring cows and playing his favourite flute created a sort of animism and subconcious physical as well as spiritual involment of Radha. Also at the same time the Gop women admired, serviced and nourished the cause of their love, which generated various folk legends through representing earthly behaviours which culminated divine upsurge in the eternal relationship between Radha and Krishna. The most popular episode in this direction finding pictorial translation are as under.

(a) Krishna taking several human forms dancing in a circular motif with all 'Gop' women surrounding himself and Radha at the centre. This is commonly called Rashamandala. This was the most significant popular motif accepted by the artists who explored various forms and motifs in keeping with the creative traits and pursuits. Some of the remarkable Rashamandalas have been exhibited at the following temples.

(i) As many as 40 Rashamandalas of different motifs at Shyama Rai Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura.
(ii) Ananta Vasudeva Temple - Bansberia, Hooghly.
(iii) Pancharatna Temple - Jamua, Pingla. Midnapore
(iv) Lakshmi Janardan Temple - Ajuria, Panskura Midnapore.
(v) Shyama Thakurani Temple - Malancha Kharagpur, Midnapore.
(vi) Raghunath Temple/Gopinath Temple - Radhakantapur, Daspur, Midnapore.
(vii) Raghunath Temple - Sridharpur, Daspur, Midnapore.
(viii) Kantaji Temple - Kantanagar, Dinajpur, Bangladesh.
(ix) Hattala Temple - Ilambajar, Birbhum.
(x) Lakshmijanardan Temple - Ilambajar Birbhum.

(b) To facilitate Radha Krishna to have the joy of elephant riding, nine gop women assembled themselves to form an elephant, which is popularly known as Navanari Kunjara. The tremendous pictorial scope of the episode has been exploited by the Artists in a greater way, some of such instances are as under.

(a) Madan Mohan Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura.
(b) Jora Bangla Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura
(c) Raghunathjiu Temple - Ghurisha, Birbhum.
(d) Gobinda (Jorbangla) Temple - Salnagar, Lohagara, Jessore, Bangladesh.
(e) Govinda Temple - Puthia, Rajshahi, Bangladesh.

(c) The magic spell and vibration of Krishna's flute generated restlessness in Radha— which virtually led her beyond the reality. Radha once had surreptitiously stolen the flute of Krishna. Being unable to find out the same and in view of Radha's denial of involvement in such act, Krishna prayed to Gop women to return the same who pointed out Radha as the miscreant. Radha however finding Krishna in a compromising mood, returned the flute with passion. The episode is known as 'Bansi' Khanda.

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The episode was also found picturised on the terracotta plaques of late mediaeval brick temples, some of which are as under.

(a) Shyam Rai Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura
(b) Sridharjiu Temple - Asanda, Howrah.
(c) Laxmi Janardan Temple - Ilambajar, Birbhum.
(d) Pratapeswara Temple - Ambika, Kalna, Bardhaman
(e) Raghunathjiu Temple - Ghurisha, Birbhum.
(f) Radhadamodar Temple - Hadalnaraynpur. Patrasayer, Bankura.
(g) Siva Temple - Balsi. Patrasayer, Bankura.
(h) Kantaji Temple - Kantanagar, Dinajpur, Bangladesh.
(i) Lalji Temple - Kalna, Bardhaman.
(j) Lashmi Janardan Temple - Devipur, Memari, Bardhaman
(k) Ratneswar Temple - Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murshidabad
(l) Gobinda Temple - Salnagar, Lohagara, Jessore, Bangladesh
(m) Ramchandra Temple Guptipara Hooghly.

(d) In a phase of isolation, Krishna raring cows and spending idle hours in the Vrindabana garden, meditated the image of Radha and the Gop women. after frantic search, could spot Krishna in the right place. After coming to know such whereabouts, Radha rushed to the spot with the intense passion and feeling of worship of the lord. At the first glance Radha and Krishna— both suffering from mutual isolation started feeling the warmth of love. To celebrate the occassion, the Gop women intensely decorated the garden with flowers and arranged for a hanging seat for both of them. The Gop women then enjoyed the pleasure of the scenario of the both of them intimately sitting on the hanging seat and its movements echoing the divine passion. This is popularly known an Jhulan Yatra.

The pictorial properties of this episode were skillfully potrayed on the terracotta plaques of the brick temples of the contemporary period, some of which are as under.

(a) Kantaji Temple - Kantnagar, Dinajpore, Bangladesh.
(b) Raghunath Temple - Sridharpur, Daspur, Midnapore.
(c) Radhavinod Temple - Purba Gopalpur, Daspur, Midnapore.
(d) Shyamrai Temple - Bishnupur, Bankura.
(e) Dewanji Temple - Hetampur, Birbhum
(f) Rash mancha - Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Midnapore.
(g) Damodar Temple - Bahirgarh Jangipur, Hooghly.
(h) Lakshmi Janardan Temple - Gaura Uttarpara, Midnapore

(e) The other popular tales about Kamsa, Jatila Kutila on espionage, Gajendra Moksha and also Krishna's milching cows being absent minded having witnessed the amazing beauty of Radha, the mock 'Durbar' of Krishna and Balaram surrounded by 'Gop' boys as attendents, Krishna pampering Radha to break the ice of Radha's dramatic silence, the ultimate episode of lasting seperation as well as heartfelt tears of Radha caused through the same, etc, also found sporadic

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potrayal on the terracotta plaques at different late mediaeval temples. some of which are as under.

(a) Gajendra Moksha	-	Raghunathjiu Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum
(b) Jatila-Kutila Conspiring in the affairs of Radha-Krishna	-	Lakshmi Varaha Temple
	-	Bagrui, Keshpur, Midnapur
(c) Ugrasen warning Kamsa	-	Janakiballav temple, Tilantapara, Sabang.Midnapore
(d) Assasination of Kamsa	-	Lakshmi Varaha Temple, Bagrui, Keshpur, Midnapore.
(e) Krishna/Balaram Leaving Mathura for Dwaraka	-	Sri Dhara Temple, Brahmanabasan, (Daspur), Midnapore
	-	Radhamadhab & Sitala Temple,Khirpai, Midnapore.
	-	Dewanji Siva Temple, Hetampur Birbhum.
	-	Deul at Chandanpur, Bolpur, Birbhum.
(f) Coronation of Krishna as King	-	Shyamchand Temple, Jayantipur, Chandrakona, Midnapore
(g) Krishna being weighed by gold	-	Shyamchand Temple, Jayantipur Chandrakona, Midnapore
(h) People Celebrating the birth of Krishna	-	Kantaji Temple, Kantanagar, Dinajpur, Bangladesh.
(i) Radha Krishna riding jointly on cow	-	Navaratna Temple, Mustafapur, Damreli, Khulna, Bangladesh
(j) Krishna being bathed by gop women with pitchers of water	-	Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura.
(k) Dancers in devotional dance with the sound of Krishna's flute	-	Shyam Rai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura

2. The Chaitanya episode

As already stated, the Bengal Vaishsavas are worshippers mainly of Radha-Krishna and the cult seems to have been culminated into an integrated system with the theology and philosophy developed by Chaitanyadeb. Bengal Vaishnavas maintain belief that Chaitanyadeb bears the aspect of Krishna, in which all the attributes of the Krishna at Vrindabana as well as those of Radha are to exist. He is in turn Gouranga who is thus Krishna and Radha combined.

It is the practice of the Chaitanya school to worship Gouranga with his companions before worshiping Krishna and to think of the lilas of Gouranga before thinking of those of Krishna, because the devotees of the school believe that Gouranga as already said is Krishna himself in a double aspect. He is thus an apt representation of self delightedness.

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Of the nine modes of Bhakti, Kirtana which is in fact the utterance and singing the glory of Lord Krishna, is a very prominent one. It is regarded in two aspects, viz., Nam Kirtana and Lila Kirtana. It is further believed that it is an expression of repentance for one's sins, both inherited and acquired. The Vaishnavas emphasise that constant remembrance of the nama of the Lord is the only means of salvation for weak mortals of Kaliyuga. Kritana in Bengal reached the acme of emotional expression through music, largely due to influence of Chaitanya and his followers. Tears, shivering, horripilation, perspiration, loss of colour of complexion, loss of voice and loss of consciousness constitute the eightfold pure signs of true devotion and the object of both Nam Kirtana and Lila Kirtana is to induce these states in the singer and in the audience.

The Kirtana singers have been potrayed on the terracotta plaques of the late mediaeval Bengal Temples, signifying the regard the common people had on this comnunity singers in the contemporary period. Some of such temples are as under–

(a)	Gopinath Temple	-	Dagshara, Dhanikhali, Hooghly
(b)	Radha Krishna & Damodar Temple	-	Anandapur. Midnapore.
(c)	Vrajaraj Kishore Temple	-	Purushottampur, Daspur, Midnapore
(d)	Lakshmi Varaha Temple	-	Bagrui, Keshpur, Midnapore
(e)	Shantinath Siva Temple	-	Mitrasenpur, Chandrakona, Midnapore
(f)	Ram chandra Temple	-	Jalchak Midnapore.
(g)	Lakshmi Janardan Temple	-	Ilambajar. Birbhum.
(h)	Pancharatna Temple at Hattala	-	Surul, Birbhum
(i)	Siva Temple	-	Mehagram. Nalhati, Birbhum.
(j)	Madan Mohan Temple	-	Bishnupur, Bankura.
(j)	Radhamadav Rashmancha	-	Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore.

Sri Gouranga has also been potrayed in a six armed posture imposing the qualities of divinity with different mythological interpretation. The image was popular and was also potrayed in terracotta plaques on various temples, some of which are as under.

(a)	Radhadamodar Temple	-	Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura.
(b)	Abandoned Pancharatna Temple	-	Balsi, Patrasayer Bankura.
(c)	Shantinath Siva Temple	-	Ilambajar, Chandrakona, Midnapore
(d)	Sridharjiu Temple	-	Kotalpur, Daspur, Midnapore.
(f)	Radhadamodar Temple	-	Alui, Ghatal, Midnapore.
(g)	Jishuuhari Temple	-	Tamluk, Midnapore.
(i)	Sitalananda Siva Temple	-	Panchkuri, Midnapore.
(h)	Radhagobinda Temple	-	Dihi Baliharpur, Daspur, Midnapore.
(i)	Bargabhima Temple	-	Tamluk, Midnapore.
(j)	Radhagobinda Temple	-	Purbagopalpur, Panskura, Midnapore.

3. The Incarnations of Lord Vishnu

D.C. Sarkar opined that an important aspect of Bhagavata Religion of the Gupta Age was the popularity of the worship of Avatara (Early history of Vaishnavism— D.C.Sarkar— C H

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I Vol-IV p. 132) ie. the descents or incarnation of Vishnu. The origin of the Avatara Conception may even be traced in later Vedic literature. Reference of such incarnation is available in Satpatha Brahmana, Taithriya Aranyaka and also in later mythological tales. In the Gita and some other sections of Mahabharata, Vishnu is represented as an ideal divinity and an almighty saviour of mankind as delighting in both moral goodness and ritualistic purity, and as incarnating himself from time to time in human and animal form for the maintenance of the standard of righteousness in the world.

Traditions as to the number of Avataras varied and the later lists of the Avataras, though the usual number ten is generally adhered to in various names. But the Puranic verse enumerating Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, the three Ramas, Buddha and Kalki as the ten Avataras, almost universally recognised since mediaeval Period. The Avatara theory which has undergone several stages of evolution, appears to be based on old popular tales about strange animals exhibiting mysterious power of helpfulness.

The potrayal of Avataras was one of the prime faculties which found expression on the terracotta plaques on almost all the brick temples of the Late mediaeval Bengal. The popular tales around the concepts of such Avataras may be briefed as under—

Fish incarnation of Vishnu-Siva Temple at Kalibari Complex -Suri, Birbhum.

(i) The Boar Avatara (Varaha)— The boar form is that of a monstrous beast seen by one hundred leagues in size having one tusk and red eyes. Earth burdened with creatures submerged by a flood neither by sinners nor by numbers, but by the weight-appealed to Vishnu, who became a unicorn boar and with his tusk or horn raised the earth a hundred leagues, which distance she had sunk into Patala.

(ii) The man lion incarnation (Narasimha) — The god as man lion makes half his body human and half leonine and with his claws tears to pieces Hiranyakashipu— the infidel. Hiranyakashipu slain by man lion became Sishupala. Hiranyakashipu represented Saivaism, whereas his virtuous son Prahalada- a Vishnuite.

(iii) The Dwarf Avatara (Vamana) — After a thousand years of Parturition (sign of divinity) Vishnu became a dwarf to overthrow Bali, usurper of Indra's power. Accompanied by Brihaspati, the dwarf 'Vamana' went to Bali and asked for three paces of land, which being granted the god covered all three paces gave back his realm to Indra and bound and sent Bali below earth— who still reigned there.

(iv) Fish Avatara (Matsya) — The oldest belief envisages that Manu— son of the sun— out of whom the men were born. Manu disposes as well as creates. He was an old man rescued

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from the water during the deluge by a fish form of Brahmana or Vishnu. The change of nymph into fish is also common in mythology.

(v) Tortoise (Kurma) Avatara— As per epics, the tortoise was not an Avatara— where it upheld the mountain Mandara at the time of churning of ocean by the Devas and Asuras. But it became Avatara of Vishnu when it raised earth and slew Hiranakshya, an Asura to free earth from his wrath, greed and pride.

(vi) Parasurama or Rama Jamadagaya— Between treta and dwapara, he cut one thousand arms of Kartavirya. He descends from Bhrigu and is son of Jamadagni and Renuka hence called Bhargava, Jamadagnya, Kausika and from his axe obtained from Siva, he was termed 'Parasurama'.

(vii) Rama Dasarathi — Rama Dasarathi is regarded as Pradurbhava (Avatar), but as human he often killed Daityas and Danavas as implying divinity. In Ramayana and Mahabharata (as per assertions of Drona) there is some difference as regards the acts and achievements of Rama. Besides Ramayana, Rama elsewhere was stated to be king of Ayodhya who reigned ten thousand ten hundred years and defeated Khara and Ravana.

(viii) Bala Rama (Baladeva) — Balarma is as much Avatar as is his brother Krishna, both representing hairs of Narayana. He is a rustic god called Langalin (Ploughman or Sankardeva) Pralambana too as slayer of demon 'Pralamba'— whose death was also attributed to Krishna.

Though usually a mere appendage of his younger brother he appears to have some battles of his own. He fought in the eighteen day battle with King Hamsa. He is devoted to wine as his brother is to woman. Such debauchery in no way detracts himself from his divinity.

(ix) Buddha Avatara— Buddha has been reported to be belonging to the begining of Kali Age as son of Suddhadana. In south Indian edition of Mahabharata he is termed as an Avatara— the Bhumer Bharavataranam — which represents a descent in active meaning. He is therefore identified to be the Avatara of God to remove the weight or burden of the earth. In Satwat Samhita, he had been termed as 'Santatwan'- representing tranquility of soul. While evaluating the iconographic symptoms in Brihat Samhita, Barahamihir termed him as 'Santaman' representing coolness of mind. The image of Buddha sitting in meditation leaning against a kingly tree— clothed in yellow, shorn and having white teeth-propagating the massage of non violence, peace and love made of significant breakthrough in the traditional way of Hindu life and it is presumed that despite being propagator of different religious sect, he was accepted as a supreme divine entity in Hinduism for certain obvious reasons.

(x) Kalki Avatara — It is stated that during Kali age, priests will neither sacrifice offerings nor engaged in study, slaves will make use of the pure and respect to the gurus will vanish, sons

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will not obey their parents. Sruti and smriti will be forgotten owing to man's indulgence to deceitful rules till the end of Kali Age— when a green-yellow Brahmana will appear called Kalki— son of Vishnuyasas— a Yagna-valka purohita. He will come as a warrior priest riding on a horse with other priests as companions to destroy the Barbarians and heretics.

While it is difficult to find out any brick temple of Late mediaeval Bengal without depiction of different incarnations of Vishnu. we find certain interchanges taking place in proliferation of images according to local beliefs. version and practices. Krishna as an Avatar took the place of Balarama, Jagannatha as an Avatar replaced Buddha (in Orissa and Bengal) and Chaitanyadev also replaced the image of Buddha (in Bengal). The fish, boar and tortoise incarnations are sometimes shown in the animal forms, whereas the same in majority of the cases are shown as therianthropic images with animal form having placed in the upper portion of two armed human or four armed Vishnu images. Some such images like Narasimha (man-lion incarnation) are shown in action slaying the evil forces as mythological tales. The dwarf incarnation is sometimes shown as a Brahman boy devotee— which in some case is presented in a large form with a posture of kicking upwards.

Some such exceptions found in the proliferation of images of ten incarnations of Vishnu are as under.

(a) Jagannath replacing Buddha	-	Bastu Shiva Temple at Harishpur, Howrah
	-	Radhagobinda Temple (Mejo Taraf) Hadalnarayanpur, Bankura
	-	Siva Temple at Khunberia (Garbeta) Midnapore
(b) Chaitanyadev replacing Buddha	-	Banka Rai Temple— Laoda— Daspur, Ghatal, Midnapore.

4. Other forms of Vishnu worship

Lord Vishnu worshipped in its original form is also found to be displayed the late mediaeval brick temples of Bengal. Vishnu as lord, ruler and creator of all appears commonly in four arms, four fangs, four forms, four lights, four presentations knowing four Vedas— red eyed, yellow complexion generally looking very fair, beautiful and lovely. He wears yellow clothes, garlands, jewelled earrings, shining gold arm bands and holding coach, discus, club and lotus or bow/sword in his four hands.

He is also shown riding on his vehicle Garuda which is his sun ship as bird— who goes or high awakening earth have a thousnad rows and flames, have seven steeds of the sun. The depiction of vishnu riding his vehicle Garuda has been available on several temple decorations of late mediaeval Bengal, some of which are as under:

(a) Shantinath Siva temple Gosai Bajar, Chandrakona, Midnapore.

(b) Siva Temple— Daskalgram, Nanur. Birbhum.

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(c) Shyama Rai Temple— Bishnupur, Bankura.

(d) Jora Bangla Temple— Bishnupur, Bankura.

Yet the most striking form of Lord Vishnu which is vastly known as a popular legend was the Anantasayi Vishnu concerning the phase of the creation of universe. The episode has been seperately discussed hereinafter.

5. Folk acculturation of Divinities and Mangala deities

The diffusion of religious knowledge also refers to enormous literary contributions of Bengali writers of diverse castes, occupations and grades of learning to the propagation of religious ideas. While the learned depended for their religions exposition on sanskrit texts, a large number of people were introduced to a new kind of religious literature which drew its materials from non aryan sources and popular tales. This literature which originated in the twelfth or the thirteenth century and reached its climax in the eighteenth is known as Mangala literature in Bengal.

In Bengal this Mangala literature or iconography is an extensive one and has been associated with such major deities as Siva, Vishnu (Krishna), Surya and Shakti (Chandi, Durga, Kalika, Annada, Gauri, Bhavani, etc) and also with such minor deities as Manasa (the goddess of serpents) Sitala (the goddess of small pox), Sasthi (the protective deity of Children), Sarada (the goddess of learning), Lakshmi (the goddess of fortune), Ganga, and even the tiger and the crocodile, the lords (Raya) of the Jungles and waters of the Sundarbans respectively. Many of these deities have come down from Drvidian or aboriginal sources but in course of their absorption into Brahmanical cult, most of them have been identified with this or that of Brahmanical deity or related to him or her by some bond of family connection. In the process of absorption, the deities brought with them their priests who mostly belonged to non-Brahmana and even untouchable castes and their cults also, with the effect that, when they were absorbed and widely worshipped in higher circles, literary justification both in Bengali and Sanskrit had to be found for them. In this way was necessitated the composition not only of Bengali songs and narratives, but also of some of the later uppuranas or the interpolation of narratives concerning these deities in the later semi classical puranic literature. The Mangala literature became the Ramayana of the masses in Bengal.

The visual transformation of such literary expositions was accomplished by the hereditary artists exposed to the social bonds stratified in the economic, spiritual and political order of the contemporary Bengal as discussed hereinbefore. The cult of the deities was strongly believed or happened to be believed in the daily life provided all elements of emotions and sensualities for celebrating the exploits of the deities though passionate transformation of the images in the medium of plastic clay in the late mediaeval Bengal.

We would now proceed to enumerate the simplest tales of anthoromorphic beliefs of the humble folks behinds the images on the terracotta plaques depictionwise and would like to reiterate the following imperatives before highlighting the fables or tales.

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(a) Deities have been conceptualised within the sphere of earthly realities as if each of the images is very intimate and tied in the family bond of the people living with the drudgeries of daily life, but acting as saviours against calamities and misfortures.

(b) Certain standard of virtues in the non ascetic form, were expected to be inculcated in the common people and contemplations for health and prosperity were called for in the worship for the deities.

The primary depictions in this direction may be summed up in the following manner.

I. Goddess Durga (Chandi) — Mythology presents goddess Durga as the genius of destruction springing into existence on occassions to fight out and destroy the evil forces jeopardising the values and virtues of the earth and also posing threats to god's creation. In Markendeyapurana and elsewhere, she is described as the slayer of bull shaped monster who challenged the ocean and the Himalayas. The buffalo shaped 'Mahisam Rupam' is said to be like a roaring cloud. He is also regarded as a Danava, Asura and his cloud, roar and attack on sea as well as mountain represent him as a storm capable of defeating the gods in battle, till such time goddess Durga caused his slain. Goddess Durga is also characterised formally as wife as well as female part Siva and is believed to reside not only at Himavat, but all over the land, deserts and under earth and conquers as war goddess. She is named Durga because she saves for 'Durga'. She has several forms with the characterstic features of difference in number of hands, out of which the front right hand should be in the abhaya pose and the back one should carry the chakra. The front left hand should be in Kataka pose and the backone should carry Shankha. She should have three eyes and be in dark complexion. She should have handsome look with a well developed bust, stout thighs, big hip, and be clad with yellow garments. On the other hands she should be armed with Sula, Dhanus, Bana, Khadga, Khetaka Vajra and Pasa etc. (Javelin, Bows & arrows, Axe, Sword, Club Surpassing, swift, chord etc.)

Mahishasuramardini-Pancharatna Temple-Puthia Rajshahi.

The most popular form of goddess Durga appearing in terracotta sculpture is the episode of slaying Buffalo demon riding on her vehicle lion and in action, slaughtering the Asura born out of buffalo demon with her weapons in hands. In her right hands, she would carry trishula, Khadga, Saktyayudha, Chakra and a stringed bow and in her left hands the Pasa, Khetka, Parssu and a bell.

The motif is cxtremely common on all the late mediaeval brick temples irrespective of worshipped deities to whom the temples are dedicated and is difficult to list out the characteristic

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edifices depicting peculiarites of the images. Nevertheless a few exceptions with difference in the number of hands, are mentioned hereunder:

(a) Four armed Simhavahini	Bargabhima Temple– Tamluk, Midnapore
(b) Four armed Durga with Sons/daughters	Lakshmi Varaha Temple Bagrui, Keshpur, Midnapore
(c) Eighteen Armed Goddess Durga	Radhadamadav Temple Maugloi– shyamballavpur Panskura, Midnapore
(d) Ten armed Durga	Most of the temples as primary motifs

II. Goddess Chandi in popular myth

Frequent depictions of the acts and achievements of the goddess Chandi are found in the temple decoration of late mediaeval Bengal. The tales of Markendaya Chandi, and Anndamangal, Chandimangala were widely known to the people of Bengal as common parlance besides their sources in the cult of Sakta worship. The different roles of Chandi or Durga have been enumerated in acceptable manner without causing any detriment to the concepts, conflict of ideas or contradictions. The roles are commonly as under

Role– (a) Chandi/Durga as slayers of demoniac forces and saviours of creation.

Role– (b) As wife and female part of Siva and affectionate mother of childern in the normal family life.

Role– (c) Gentle daughter returning to parent's home.

Role– (d) Maintaining attitude to compel people to accept and offer worship in order to avoid personal calamity.

Role– (e) Matrikas/Yoginis in the the Sakta cult.

The respective roles are being taken up seriatim in order to present the extent of emphasis put by the Artisans/ Builders on the fables arounds the goddess in the contemporary art practices.

Role— A. Slayer of demoniac forces

The most commonly accepted role as slayer of buffalo demon has already been discussed hereinbefore. The Goddess in various other crisis situations appeared as a champion of justice and caused destruction of evil forces to save the creation. She waged war against Sumbha-Nishumbha, Dhumralochana, Raktabeej— the Rakshasas having all demoniac attributes and also against many other Rakshasas from time to time. The Asuras or Rakshasas are identified with natural phenomenon and got their names therefrom. They had the ability to assume any shape or to disappear as a general characterstic. They were found to be opposing light and goodness. They did also posess the expertise of 'Maya' or illusion or deception.

Kashyapa pronounced as father of all creatures, had several wives including Aditi mother of Adityas, Diti mother of Hiranyakashipu-father of Prahalada etc, Danu— mother of Danavas including Viprachitis, Sambara, Namuci, Puloman, Sumbha and Nishumbha etc. Namuci became a terror— who through his endless oppression attempted to occupy the heaven and was in turn slaughtered by Indra. The death of Namuci induced Sumbha and Nishumbha to invade and wage

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war to occupy heaven which they succeeded. Rakta Beej– the Minister of Buffalo demon Mahishasura informed Sumbha-Nishumbha about the assasination of his master by Goddess Durga (Kaushiki) at Vindhya mountain and also the defeat of the commanders Chhanda and Munda— who were hiding themselves in deep waters. Instantly Sumbha and Nishumbha communicated their willingness to marry Durga as a recourse, which the goddess responded with a condition that she should be defeated in war by anyone of them. The dual Asuras sent their commadants to catch hold of the goddess Durga. Dhumralochana was slaughtered by goddess Durga and thereafter Raktabeej who was a distinguished expert in Maya or illusions sent platoons of soldiers to fight out the goddess. Despite various magical illusions like each drop of blood of Rakta Beej giving birth to a demon, Goddess Durga ruthlessly slaughtered Rakabeej

Waging War against Demons— Jora Bangla Temple- Bishnupur Bankura.

Goddess Chandi fighting demons- Jora Bangla Temple- Bishnupur Bankura.

and all his comandants. Immediately thereafter when Sumbha-Nishumbha proceeded again to marry the goddess showing their capability to defeat her, they were slaughered by the goddess.

The episodes have been partially exhibited at many temple decorations of Bengal in late mediaeval times. However detailed enumerations in different plaques are found in various temples, a few of which are as under.

a) Radha Damodar Rashmancha– Mangloi shyamballavpur Panskura. Midnapore.
b) Janakiballav Temple– Tilantapara, Sabang, Midnapore.
c) Radha Damodar Temple— Hadalnaryanpur, Bankura.
d) Kali Temple– Itanda, Bolpur, Birbhum.,
e) Kantaji Temple– Kantanagar, Dinajpur, Bangladesh
f) Jora Bangla Temple— Bishnupur, Bankura
g) Ratneswar Temple– Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murshidabad.
h) Kali Temple– Barnagar Murshidabad.
i) Pancha Ratna Temple – Puthia, Rajshahi.

Role— B and C Folk syncretism of Lord Shiva and Goddess Durga (Chandi)

There are several instances where many early and late mediaeval images hailing from different territories demonstrating in a very striking manner clear ideas of cult syncretism, which underline

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them. The amalgam of Sakta and Saiva cults is demostrated in permeation of Sakta devis Durga in the family bonds of Siva at Kailasha, who is a Supreme cult divinity, losing his foothold in popular affection. Similar is the case of Ganesha who did find his position is the intaglio belonging to the reconciliation, as an affectionate son of Durga.

The family bond, demonstration of motherhood being tied up with the passions, sentiments and feelings attributable to a common household as Siva's counterpart and Sakti, and a radical transformation of the character from fighting Durga to that of a gentle daughter returning to her parent's home with her two sons Ganesha and Kartikeya and her two daughters Lakshmi and Saraswati, are the clements, elaborately displayed on the terracotta plaques of late mediaeval Bengal temples.

The narratives around Siva and Durga as Mangala deities syncretised in the popular tales finding elaborate artisitic transformation are indicated below to support the themes and depictions evident in the images.

6. Siva in popular myth

The common form known of Lord Siva characterises him as long necked, pot belly, a snake wearer, club bearer. Of many forms his ensign is bull, trident in hand, sometimes having three heads, six arms, flame (red) hair, clothed in snakes and conventionally three eyed. He is also described as boon giver, white necked living in crematoria, having all forms, whose club is a post, smiter of Tripura, blue necked, red haired, who is fond of courtiers, leader of ghosts, dear to Gauri, overseer to treasure, clothed in space, wearer of the moon on head. He also is surrounded by Bhutas overshort and overlong.

Apart from his pivotal role as creator, he is a champion of destruction rather than reproduction. He is described as slayer of evils and the battleground of death is his playground. Rudra is his devastating form who is born when crime is committed.

It is stated that Siva creates in Linga form. By his divine Linga, the worlds are increased. It is worshipped by gods, seers, gandharvas and apsaras and Maheswara rejoices when his heavenly linga is revered.

Siva is worshipped in folk traditions with different nomenclature from the early days. The folk poets subordniated his supreme divinity to earthly human characterstics within the framework of daily life of course maintaining a high dignity to the super human and divine qualities of the god. To the common people of Bengal, Siva was very nearer to their reach and they imposed upon him their faculties of emotion, passion, pathos, pleasures of the draudgery of earthly existence. It is as if Siva is a guardian neighbour who is a common precedent of ideal humanity with superhuman traits and Uma (Durga or Chandi) is a kin daughter in a common Bengali family having traits of a married daughter in known surroundings. Common people had extreme emotions and deep affinity to such neighbours who became real possibilities in practice to restore social values, and to overcome social crisis at the appropriate moment. The folk tales that even a divinity

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like Siva had to dig the soil for human welfare induced the common men to accept the dignity of labour as a core value. The Bengali women could afford to forget the sufferings of poverty because Uma herself was stated to suffer in the same way. Such deep beliefs of the artists found reflection in terracotta plaques on the temple decorations of late mediaeval Bengal. The following aspects of the episode are also relevant to such narratives around the life of Siva.

i) Sukhasanamurthi– Uma is sometimes found seated upon the left lap of Siva and her right hand taken round to embrace and resting upon the right side of the chest of Siva and carrying in the left hand some fruit or lotus flower. The front hand of Siva is held in Abhaya pose and the front left hand is placed or the left shoulder of Uma. In the back right and left hands are the trishula and Damaru respectively. The devi wears on her head, the hair done up in a fine side knot.

There is sometimes profusion of snake ornaments— on the crown, ear lobes, on the arms and round the chest of Siva.

ii) Destruction of Daksha's sacrifice

Daksha— a mental son of Kashyapa celebrated his elevation to a status higher than Prajapati as awarded by the great God through performance of a Mahayagya— in which all gods of the three worlds were invited as distinguished guests excluding Siva and his wife Uma— who happens to be the daughter of Daksha. Siva took serious exception to the exclusion and requested Uma not to go to her parental house as a stranger without any formal invitation. But Uma, considering the performance of sacrifice by Daksha as something extremely personal to her parents became very weak and desperately proceeded to her parental house on the auspicious occassion. Siva warned her of probable humiliation but could not restrain her from the visit.

Siva-Parvati-Raghunathjiu Temple Ghurisha, Burbhum.

On reaching the spot, Uma was openly humiliated by her father Daksha in the presence of all distinguished guests with abusive words about Siva-her husband. Uma could not withstand the extent of assault of her husband and sacrificed her life on the spot.

On receipt of the information Siva became extremely upset and the floodgate of his anger and wrath was opened instantly generating disastrous effects. He alongwith Virbhadra and other spirits born out of his hair pits, pretas, pisacas as well as other attendants rushed to Daksha's palace. Siva's shot the sacrifice— that fled as a deer, kicked pushan and uprooted his teeth when he was enjoying cakes at the sacrifice, pulled out the eyes of Bhaga and fractured the arms of Sabriti and one after another paralysed all the gods who failed to show due regard to him. Siva slaughtered Daksha and threw his head in the fire.

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The picturesque episode has been skillfully potrayed on the terracotta plaques of the late mediaeval temples of Bengal.

iii) Siva's marriage

In a bid of conciliation by the gods Uma was revived and was reborn in the name of Parvati as the daughter of Himavat and Menoka.

Siva's marriage procession in his traditional costume riding on his vehicle bull and escorted by his usual attendants including Nandi-Bhringi, Pretas, Pisachas etc. caused an adverse reaction in the mind of Menoka— who became extremely worried about the fate of her innocent daughter in the murky atmosphere at Siva's habitation. The attending gods including Brahma, Vishnu, advocated Siva's superiority in the pantheon of gods and endorsed the merits of Siva as a groom. Siva also exhibited his 'Madan Mohan' image to Menoka to ease the tension.

The elaborate marriage scenes of Siva clothed with tiger skin wearing snakes as ear rings and girdle with crescent moon on his brow and other inherent attributes in the normal course, being surrounded by his attendants alongwith her relations has been translated into a picturesque reality in terracotta panels by the artists on the late mediaevel brick temples of Bengal.

(iv) The other popular tales concerning Siva's household at 'Kailasha', Siva's journey to Kailasha sitting jointly with Parvati on his vehicle bull, Parvati's addiction to Dice-Play and Menoka's counselling, etc, have been narrated on terracotta plaques or sculptures on sporadic basis at different temples.

(v) The family life of Parvati with due passion and affection on her children– to say Ganesha (Ganapati) who happens to be the elder son and Kartikeya the younger one, Saraswati and Lakshmi— her daughters also generated a series of folk tales among the people as evident in the terracotta art decorations in late mediaeval temple of Bengal.

Ganesha is shown as elephant headed having four arms in which he keeps Ankusa, Pasa, Danta and Modaka. Accompanying him is his vehicle 'Mouse'.

Kartikeya appears to be an accomplished, smart warrior with two hands carrying bows/arrows embracing his favourite vehicle Peacock.

Lakshmi is considered as a full of riches, who was also conceived as a wife a Vishnu, at the sametime considered as Devi at the court of Siva. In the process of mythological stratification at different levels she had been identified as a daugthter of Parvati finding place in the core of Parvati's household.

Saraswati who is visualised as the goddess of wisdom, also finds her role in the tenets of Durga as primoridal Sakti. The goddess of learning and arts became familar and connected to the pantheon as daughter of Parvati in the mythological intricacies, was also widely accepted as a motif. relevant to the folk tales around the Siva family.

Lakshmi and Saraswati also appear as independent images in various temples of the late mediaeval Bengal.

(vi) Kala Bhairava– the Siva Purana calls Bhairava— the Purnarupa or the full moon of Shankara and that those whose intellect is darkened by Maya are not able to understand the

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superiority of this aspect of Siva and decline to worship it. Bhairava is so called because he protects the universe (Bharana) and because he is terrific (Bhisana). He is known as Kala Bhairava for even Kala (the god of death) trembles before him.

This form of Siva in its folk versions is also found potrayed in terracotta plaques of the late mediaeval brick temple of Bengal on a few occassions.

(vii) Gajlakshami is worshipped in an image of golden yellow complexion having four hands and being seated upon a lotus of eight petals placed upon a simhasana. In one of the two right hands she should hold a lotus with a long stalk and in the other a bilva fruit; the left hands should carry an Amritaghata and a Shankha respectively. Two elephants standing a little behind her should pour from pots pure water on her head for bathing her. On her head also there should be a lotus.

This form of Lakshmi is also found potrayed on terracotta plaques of late mediaeval Bengal Temples on several occassions.

The depictions of Durga (Chandi) and Lord Shiva in different postures are so widespread on the terracotta decorations of the late mediaeval temples that it is difficult to highlight the edifices bearing the common available images seperately on case to case busis. However the special observations on this count are mentioned hereunder.

(a) Shiva destroying Daksha's Sacrifice	– Damodarjiu Temple– Bhattagram Garbeta, Midnapore. Siva Temple at Nandipukur, Dubrajpur, Birbhum.
(b) Dancing Siva	– Darmodarjiu Temple, Marghurali, Jagatballavpur, Howrah.
(b) Siva Carrying deadbody of Sati with tredent in hand	– Damodarjiu Temple, Garbeta, Midnapore – Siva Temple, Nandipukur, Dubrajpur, Birbhum
(c) Siva/Parvati Jointly riding on a bull	– Raghunathjiu Temple– Ghurisha Birbhum. – Siva Temple – Angora, Nanur, Birbhum – Adinath Siva Temple– Rasa– Khairasole, Birbhum
(d) Siva Durga with Kids and Nandi. Bhringi as assistants	– Ratneshwar Siva Temple— Gobardhanpur, Pingla.Midnapore – Siva Temple (Deul)— Ilambajar, Birbhum – Ratneswar Siva- Gobardhanpur, Pingla Midnapore. – Gokulchand Temple— Santipur, Nadia – Rashmancha,— Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura.
(e) Linga Worship	– Jhareswar Siva Temple,—Rajnagar, Panskura, Midnapore – Radhadamodar and Sitala Temple– Khirpai Midnapore. – Charchala Gobinda and Pancharatna Temple,Putia, Rajshahi
(f) Siva sitting with horn flute in hand	– Rashmancha, Ichhapur, Jagatballavpur, Howrah.
(g) Kala Bhairava riding tiger	– Kali Temple, Itanda, Birbhum, – Sridhara Temple, Hattala, Rajgram, Bankura.

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(h) Siva playing Vina Surrounded by his courtiers	Siva Temple– Paschimpara, Surul Birbhum.
(i) Parvati in a posture of affection of her son Gansha	Siva Temple, Paschimpara, Surul, Birbhum.
(j) Gajalakshmi	Rashmancha, Hadalnarayanpur. Patrasayer, Bankura Charchala Temple, Puthia.Rajshahi Kali Temple, Tarapith Chandranath Siva Temple,— Hetampur, Birbhum Sridharjiu Temple,— Kharkusuma, Garbta, Midnapore. Damodar Temple,— Balipota,Daspur, Midnapore
(k) Durga as Annapurna	Temple at Mayrapara,— Dubrajpur, Birbhum. Vishnu Temple, Srirampore,— Arambagh, Hooghly Damodarjiu Temple,— Bhattagram, Garbeta, Midnapore.
(l) Five headed Shiva riding on vehicle Bull engaged in fight with Vishnu riding on Garuda–	Atchala Siva Temple at Pashimpara, Baliguni, Nanur Birbhum

7. Popular Chandimangala motif— Kamalekamini.

In Mangala Kavyas it is sometimes observed that a strategy is adopted by the concerned deities to coerce worship by threatening calamity and promising earthly prosperities.Similarly it appears that the worship of Chandi was initiated only when she brought misfortune to a rich merchant– Dhanapati and was finally accepted in the community.

Kamale Kamini is a version of Devi Chandi. Dhanapati who was an ardent Shiva worshipper neglected Chandi as a divine power and faced calamity on a sea voyage to Ceylon. Devi Chandi thus did appear and had shown her real divine image to enable Dhanapati to understand her divinity.

In fact the image was perceived in illusion in which Devi displayed herself sitting on a lotus composed with sixty four petals who were in fact Yoginis. In such a form Devi floated herself on the sea and did show as if she was holding an elephant in the left hand and was digesting as well as vomitting the same consecutively. The scene was believed inauspicious for any viewer. It was noted as a 'Kamale Kamini' image of Devi Chandi.

The tremendous pictorial scope of the image was explored and displayed by the artists repeatedly in terracotta decoration of late mediaeval Bengal temples, some of which are as under.

(a) Balihar Temple– Rajshahi, Banglandesh.
(b) Janakiballav Temple – Tilantapara, Sabang Midnapore.
(c) Damodar Temple – Bhattagran. Goaltore, Midnapore.
(d) Raghunath Temple – Alangiri, Egra, Midnapore
(e) Sitala Temple – Fakir Bajar. Daspur- Midnapore

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(f) Shayamsundar Rashmancha – Saulan, Daspur, Midnapore.
(g) Lakshmi Varaha Temple – Bagrui, Keshpur, Midnapore.
(h) Sea Voyage of Dhomapati/Sripati
(i) Siva Temple– Namopara, Dubrajpur, Birbhum.
(ii) Siva Temple (Deul) Jalandi, Nanur Birhhum.
(iii) Lakshmi Janardan Temple–Ajuria, Panskura, Midnapore.
(iv) Bhubaneswar Siva Temple–Uttar Gobindapur, Daspur, Midnapore.
(v) Gopinath Temple–Radhakantapur, Daspur, Midnapore.

8) Other popular deities in folk Syncretisation.

i) Jagadhatri– another popular form of Goddess Durga

Jagadhatri in yet another form of Durga which became very popular in Bengal during mediaeval times. She is described as having golden yellow complexion in red garments. Her head in generally covered with Kiritamukha and she must be adorned with golden ornaments set with rubbies. She should carry in her hands the Sula, the Khadga, the Shankha and the Chakra. Her vehiele is said to be lion.

The image of Jagadhatri has been potrayed and sculpted on various late mediaeval Brick temples, some of which are as under.

(a) Jagadhatri on twin lions– Siva Temple. Ilambajar, Birbhum.
(b) Traditional posture–
(1) Chandranath Siva Temple, Hetampur, Birbhum.
(ii) Damodar Temple, Bhattagran, Goaltore, Midnapore
(iii) Shantinath Siva Temple-Ilambajar, Chandrakona, Midnapore.

ii) Manasa– Manasa emerged in the folk tradition as a successor of Sarpadevi (Goddess of serpents) from the early prehistoric period, who was worshipped for overcoming the effects of snake poison, curing snake bites or revitalising people suffering snake bites and keeping people away of the evils of snake poison.

Her image was conceived in different iconic forms in Brahmanical concepts, in Buddhist Mahayana as Mahamayuri, Janguli and elsewhere as Jagatgauri etc. Neverthless its gradual deviation from the institutional religion and gaining ground as a folk deity revitalised the myths and legends around her life which became extremely popular through the poetic composition of Manasamangala, Pachali and other ballads etc.

Manasa reportedly born in water out of Siva's instinctual whims, was married to Jaratkaru-a saint. As goddess she is very upright, destructive, but pitiful to her worshippers. She appears to be sitting on a lotus, four armed and profusely ornamented by snakes. Her vehicle is swan.

Among several late mediaeval temples having terracotta plaques depicting Manasa, the followings are illustrative.

a) Vishnu Temple – Kharkusuma, Garbeta, Midnapore.
b) Raghunathjiu Temple– Ghurisha, Birbhum.

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c) Kali Temple– Tarapith, Birbhum.

d) Radha Damodar Temple– Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura.

iii) Sitala– Sitala became a goddess of reverence to the common folk in the rural life of Bengal who is much dreaded and is propriated to ward of calamites. Sitala is perhaps most popular and is held in great dread as the goddess of small pox. Sitting on her vehicle ass, Sitala has different attributes in her four hands. We also find the image of sitala appearing in the terracotta plaques of the late mediaeval Bengal, a few of which are as under.

(a) Radhadamodar Temple – Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura.

(b) Radhadamodar Temple– Dayal Bajar. Malopara, Khirpai, Midnapore.

iv) Goddess Ganga and Yamuna– Goddess Ganga in personified form is the daughter of Himavat and Menaka– wife of Siva and mother of Skanda– who is symbolised as destroyer of sins. She is a Devi with bright complexion riding on Makara (a mythological aquatic animal– the capricorn). is also picturised in temple terracotta art decorations of late mediaeval Bengal. Goddess Yamuna also rarely appears in terracotta decorations along with the image of goddess Ganga. The Yamuna, which is also called Kalindi– Mother of king Sagara and Ikvaku dynasty, is personified as a deity riding on her vehicle, 'Tortoise'. Some of the temples having such depictions are as under.

(a) Shyamrai Temple– Bishnupur, Bankura

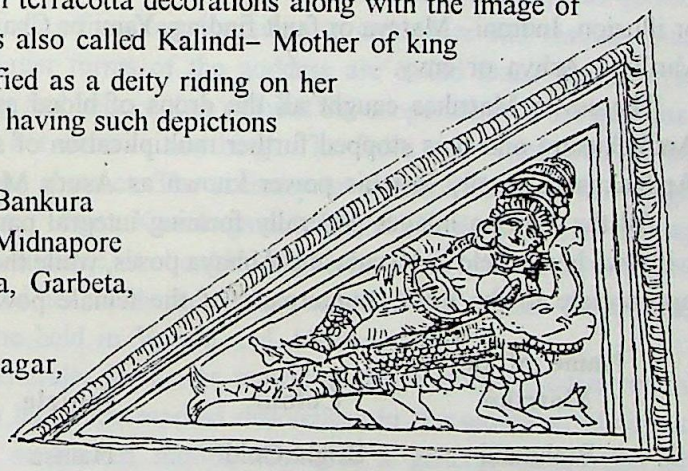
(b) Bargabhima Temple– Tamluk, Midnapore

(c) Sridharjiu Temple– Kharkusuma, Garbeta, Midnapore.

(d) Char Bangla Temple– Barnagar, Murshidabad

(e) Kantaji Temple– Kantanagar. Dinajpore, Bangladesh.

(f) Radhadamodar Temple– Hadalnaraynpur, Patrasayer, Bankura.



Goddess Ganga at charbangla Temple-Barnagar Ajimgunj, Dt. Murshidabad

9. Matrikas/Yoginis in the Sakta cult.

i) Sapta Matrika or Asta Matrika (The mother goddess)

Andhakasura— the king of Asuras became very powerful and caused annoyance of Devas— who met Siva seeking remedy. Andhakasura appeared at Kailasha with a view to snatch away Parvati from Siva, who prepared for an encounter, clad with elephant skin derived from Nila— an Asura killed in the first encounter, ornamented with serpents and wielding his powerful Trishula, Siva started his war expedition along with his army consisting of Ganas. while vishnu and other Devas fled, Siva struck the Asura with his arrow, which crippled him. Profuse bleeding from

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the wound of the Asura was witnessed and each drop of the blood touching earth assumed the shape of Andhakasura.Thus thousands of Andhaksuras started fighting Siva, who thrusted his trishula through the body of the original Andhaksura and started dancing. Vishnu floated his chakra and drove his gadha to perish the secondary Asuras. To prevent such falling of blood drops on the earth, Siva created out of the flame that was issuing from his mouth a Shakti called Yogeshwari. Indra and other devas also sent their Shaktis to serve the same purpose. They are Brahmani, Maheswari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Indrani and Chamunda. They were representing the female counterparts of Brahma, Maheswara, Kumara, Vishnu, Varaha, Indra and Yama and wearning the same garments, riding the same vehicle, carrying the same banners corresponding to Male gods. Such is the origin of sapta Matrikas or seven mother goddess.

The Varaha Purana however states these mother goddesses are eight including among them the goddess Yogeswari, The Varaha Purana mentions that these Matrikas represent eight mental qualities— which are non acceptable moralities. Yogeshwari represents kama or desire, Maheshwari Krodha or anger, Vaishnavi— Love or coveteousness, Brahmani Mada or pride, Kaumari– Moha or illusion, Indrani– Matsya or fault finding, Yami or Chamunda– Paisunga– i.e. tale bearing and Varihi— Ashya or envy.

The seven Matrikas caught all the drops of blood as they fell in battle between Siva and Andhakusura and thus stopped further multiplication of secondary Andhakasuras. In the battle, Andhakasura finally lost his power known as Asura Maya and was defeated by Siva.

All the matrika images generally forming integral part of tantric worship are seated images with two hands held in Varada and Abhaya poses, while the other two hands should carry weapons appropriate to the male counterparts of the female powers.

	Name of the Matrika	Colour	Vehicle	Weapons	
				Back right hand	Back left hand
1)	Brahmani	Bright Gold	Hamsa	Sula	Akshamala.
2)	Vaishnavi	Dark	Garuda	Chakra	Sankha.
3)	Indrani (3 eyes)	Red	Elephant	Vajra	Sakti
4)	Chamunda (3 eyes wearing a garland of skulls)	Red (dark complexion)	Dead body of human being	Skull	Sula
5)	Maheshwari (3eyes)	White	Bull	Sula	Akshamala
6)	Kaumari	Bright	Peacock	Sakti	Kukkuta
7)	Varihi (face of a boar)	Storm-cloud	Elephant	Hala	Shakti

Addition as per Varsaha Purana

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Yogeshwari (ten hands– three eyes)	Sakti, Khadga, Damaru (3 right hands)	Ghanta, Khataka Khat bhanga, 2 Trishula (4 left arms)

The deities being Brahmanical deities primarily, find their existence at different terracotta temples of late mediaeval Bengal with certain modification/local influences, partially or in a cluster wherever imperative.

ii) Dasa Mahavidya

Popular folk legends assert Uma (or Sati) as a female forester in company with Siva as mountaineer. When Siva was excluded from the invitees of Daksha sacrifice, Siva himself was extremely reluctant over the proposed visit of Uma to parental house. There had been much of disputes and Siva's refusal to let her proceed, enabled her to demonstrate her 'Sakti' as genius of destruction or pity in ten different forms from ten directions to intimidate and restrain Siva from such prohibitions These ten different forms of the goddess are called Dasa Mahavidya.

The Saktas made Devi supreme deity and believe that without the cooperation of the goddess. the absolute Brahman of itself could not achieve anything. The Sakti was conceived to be personification of universal energy in the abstract. The ordinary or common form of the image of Devi as the consort of Siva is given in 'Uttara Kamikagama'. There it is described as having four arms, three eyes and a pacific countenance. It should wear on the head a Karanda Mukuta and be clad with silk garments. In two of her hands the 'Pasa' and 'Ankusa' should be carried, while the remaining two arms are to be held in Varada and Abhaya poses.

The Dasa Mahavidyas which are generally known as tantric deities manifest themselves in benign as well as terrific forms. There had been marked differences in the narration of forms in different literary texts as well as sculptured motifs. However a general description of Mahavidyas are given hereunder, which in certain cases may differ depending upon sectoral or territorial beliefs or sculptors' or Artists perception.

Name of the Matrika	Colour	Vehicle	Weapons/hands
Kali	Black	Headless dead body/Siva	Khadga, Pasa Khatbhanga, Skin.
Tara	Green	Lotus	Varada & Utpala Pasa, Ankusa
Sorashi	Dark	Lotus	Akshamala, Abhay Danda, Vardan
Bhubaneswari	Red	Seated in Padmasana	Pasa, Abhay Ankusa, Vardan

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Name of the Matrika	colour	vehicle	Weapons/hands
Bhairavi	Red	do	do (sometimes 12 armed with different weapon)
Chhinnamasta	Black	Vehiele Rati and Kama	Holding her own slaughtred head in her own left hand. which is being fed by the blood flowing down form her own naked neck
Dhumavati	Smoke colour	Seated upon Padmasana	Pasa, Abhay Ankusa, Vardan
Bagala	Dark	Dead body	Khadga, Abhaya Trishula, Vardan
Matangi	Dark	Lion	Sula, Abhay Akshamala, Vardan
Kamala	Golden yellow	Lotus of eight petals placed upon a simhasana	Lotus, Abhay Bilva fruit, Vardan

Difference in number of hands and weapons being carried are noticed form place to place for which it is difficult to place in uniform patterns the iconographic details.

The esoteric implications of Tantric rites in Bengal is understood through the extensive worship of the divine mother or shakti. The lofty spirited ideals underlying the tantric practices included identification of the worshipper himself with the deity he worships.

Of the ten manifestations of Dasamahavidya, again Sorashi, Kali, Tara, and Bhubaneshwari claims, in a descending order, the largest number of worshippers and consequently largest amount of literature. Chinnamasta (also known as Prachanda Chandika or Sumukhi), Dhaumavati and Bagala are principally worshpped in connection with the performance of six magic rites for averting evils (santi), subduing a man or woman (Bashikarana), arresting any feeling or force (Stambhana), creating enmity among affectionate friends (Vidvesana) overthrowing an energy (Uchatana) and causing death to somebody (Marana).

The portraiture of Matrika images is elaborate in majority of the temples on different plaques seperately in panels or otherwise, denotes that worship of the Sakti continued to remain as a strong imperative in the contempory spiritual life of Bengal. Some of the temples bearing elaborate depictions in this regard are summarised as under.

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a) Shyama Rai Temple	Bishnupur.	Bankura	
b) Jor Bangla Temple	Bishnupur	Bankura	
c) Kantaji Temple	Kantanagar	Dinajpore	Bangladesh
d) The Sandhya & Siva Temples at Puthia	Puthia	Rajshashi	Bangladesh
e) The Siva Temple at Hatikumrul	Hati Kumrul	Pabna	Bangladesh
f) The Gangeshwar Siva Temple	Barnagar	Murshidabad	
g) The Ratneswar Temple at Bhattamati	Bhattamali (Nabagram)	Murshidabad	
g) The Gunjannath Siva Temple	Telkupi	Jessore.	
l) Radhamadav Temple	Mangloi Shyamballavpur	Midnapore	
m) Laxmi varaha Temple	Bagrui Keshpur	Midnapore	
n) Janaki ballav Temple	Tilantapara Sabang	Midnapore	
o) Halkhola Temple (Octagonal)	Ilambajar	Birbhum	
p) Raghunathjiu Temple	Ghurisha	Birbhum	
q) Laxmi Janardan Temple	Ghurisha	Birbhum	
r) Siva Temple	Chandanpur Bolpur	Birbhum	
s) Lalji Temple	Ambika Kalna	Bardhaman	

10. Other popular deities frequently available in terracotta art.

i) Goddess Kali an independent image

Out of the above Goddeses, Kali as an independent image was largely worshipped in Bengal and we did not in fact find a single terracotta temple of mediaeval Bengal where the goddess did not appear in some form or the other. Goddess Kali in the traditional perceptions represent mother power or the divine energy in many forms and symbols. She is symbolised as goddess of death, playing the dance of destruction. In the form of Kali she is represented as the power

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of creation, protection and destruction and as the power in which all things rest after dissolution. She stands on the still, prostrate form of Siva, the representation of the absolute. This is symbolical of the entire cosmic process with the transcendental reality as its basis. Reality is beyond both life and death, and as such, the devotee should neither cling to life not be afraid of death.

Goddess Kali from Kali Temple-Barnagar, Ajimgunj, Murshidabad.

The worship of Kali in Bengal is stated to be introduced by the famous Tantrik author, Krishnanda Agambagish who have been a contemporary of Sri Chaitanya, He is believed to have conceived and introduced through divine inspiration, the image of Kali as she is now worshipped in Bengal.

We do not in fact, feel any necessity to pinpoint any particular temple evidencing the image of Kali as a depiction of exception. Nevertheless, out of such depictions the image of 'Tribhanga Krishnakali was a form which became popular in Bengal. A few temples evidencing such depiction are–

a) Laxmi Varaha Temple– Bagrui, Keshpur, Midnapore.

b) Deul of Mahapatra family– Damodarpur, Dantan, Midnapore

ii) Goddess Lakshmi as an independent image

Though the worship of the Goddess is associated with the cult of Siva, Vishnu and Brahma, she is worshipped as an independent image, in seperate temple as well. First of all Lakshmi is considered as consort of Lord Vishnu. She is conceived to be treasured by her Lord on the right side of his broad chest. She is seated upon a lotus and holds in her four hands a lotus with a long stalk, a 'Bilva' fruit; an 'Amritaghata' and a 'Shankha' respectively. On her head there should also be a lotus and be adorned with Keyura and Kankana.

She emerged as a household goddess and also appears as an independent image in the terracotta decorations on almost all the temples, besides her image as a prominent member of the Siva family.

No particular mention of any specific temple with such depiction is therefore feasible.

Gajalaxmi- CharBangla Temple-Barnagar, Ajimgunj, Murshidabed.

iii) Goddess Saraswati as an independent image

The goddess of learning is associated with Lord Brahma. She is seated upon a white lotus and is of white complexion and also is drapped with while clothes. She has four hands. In the left hands she carries respectively a book and a while lotus. She wears

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a Yagnopovita on her person and has Jata Mukuta on her head, otherwise also she is decked with various ornaments. In Markandeya Purana she is described to be holding in her hands an Ankusa, a Vina, an Akshamala and a Pustaka.

There is certain other interpretation about her in Skanda Purna, Amsumadhedagama and Vishnudharmottara. Saraswati is looked upon as Sakti of Siva, sometime, as Sakti of Vishnu and in folk legends, she is shown as daugher and part of Goddess Durga and associated as a member Siva family.

Neverthless Saraswati as an independent goddess with the iconic image as per Markandeya Purana depicted with swan as her vehicle has become a household goddess of wisdom, learning and arts in Bengal and appeared on all the terracotta temples of mediaeval Bengal irrespective of periodicity and location. Seperate mention of any particular temple with such depiction is therefore not feasible.

iv) Other divine images depicted in terracotta plaques.

(a) Narada– He is son of Viswamitra. He wanders over the worlds— human and divine. He is also reported as human form of Vishnu. Narada— a gandharva is a cloud spirit. hence a rumbler and grumbler-finally a saint fond of strife. He is Maharishi-especially Devarishi, but he appears on cloud. Narada is 'Lokacara' and as a cloud with Svasana (wind) goes as messenger. He has a soul stained with love of strife. He is fable monger, philosopher and sectarian teacher.

His image evidently appears on cloud riding on his vehicle 'Dheki' alongwith his musical instrument appears sporadically on various terracotta temples of mediaeval Bengal, some of which are as under.

a) Sridharjiu Temple– Kotalpur, Daspur, Midnapore
b) Lakshmi Janardan Temple– Kushpata– Gobindapur, Ghatal, Midnapore
c) Siva Temple– Namopara, Dubrajpur, Birbhum
d) Gokulchand Temple– Santipur, Nadia

(b) Surya images

Of the vast vedic pantheon, Surya alone formed the god of a particular sect and many temples were created for his worship. This seems to be due to three reasons. In the first place the Gayatri Mantra daily repeated by the Brahmans kept alive the memory of Sun god. secondly the orb of the sun being daily visible, the idea of worship could not be dropped altogether. Further, the magic of Persia brought a cult of the sun into India in or around the third century of Christian era.

The images of surya is conceived as having four hands bearing different weapons including Kamandulu, Akshamala and lotus, standing within a charriot driven by seven horses and Aruna as charriteer. The myth of Aruna is that he is appointed to go before the sun on his rising thus protecting the world from excessive heat.

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The tales around surya have been sporadically found on different terracotta plaques on late mediaeval Bengal Temples, some of which are as under.

a) Charriotted Surya glooming and devotees worshipping– Jagannath, Temple, Badar, Keshpur, Midnapore

b) Supreme goddess Gayatri in the orbit of Surya with Swan as vehicle.
   i) Simhavahini Temple– Paikpari, Debra, Midnapore
   ii) Jagannath Temple– Badar. Keshpur, Midnapore.

Dancing deity probably of Syncretist order alongwith female counterparts-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur Bankura.

(c) Brahma

The cosmic myth derives even Brahma (who is considered as Adideva or original god) from the golden egg and philosophy has him born of Atman– a theory united with that of Vishnu's navel. Vasistha addresses Brahma as born of the egg. born of lotus, god of gods, saviour of the world.

Neverthless in such legends, Brahma is treated as a subject of Vishnu and the god produces him from his nevel and curtly orders Brahma to attend his creative business.

Brahma is 'Chaturmukha', 'Chaturanana' and 'Chaturvaktra', not as having four faces and so four heads, and as bearing a Veda on each head, but as being omniscient, seeing all directions. Except for an allusion to his veda knowing hand, this is almost the only descriptive epithet of his form. He is as also said is Sarvajna (all Knowing) and as such, he is also Chaturmurti as he is Chaturveda, embracing four forms or divisions of law and Veda, Again he is Amitadhih (of unmeasured wisdom), more particularly he knows the past, the present and the future. He is also Isa and Sambhu (later epithets of Siva) aware of what will happen and as such a Suraguru, most venerable of the gods, he commands Vishnu to be born on earth and Vishnu receives the command carried to him by Indra, says, 'it is well' and obeys.

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The images of Adideva Brahma has been potrayed on varions terracotta plaques of late mediaeval Bengal Temples, some of which are as under.

a) Bargabhima Temple– Tamluk, Midnapore.
b) Sridharjiu Temple– Palaspai, Midnapore.
c) Radhavinod Temple– Jaidev Kenduli, Birbhum.
d) Jora Bangla Temple– Bishnupur Bankura.
e) Raghunathjiu Temple– Ghurisha, Birbhum
f) Kantaji Temple– Kantanagar, Dinajpore.

11. *The World Protectors (Dasdikapala,Lokpala/Dikpala)*

As per epic there are eight guardians of different directions. They protect the world in 'disah' directions, nevertheless the worlds below and above is also included in some later epics making the number of guardians ten, which has been accepted as a popular myth.

Taking into consideration the different assertion in epics as well as existing beliefs narrated in the Puranas, the lokapalas or dikpalas may be summed up as under

Cardinal Directions

1) SOUTH– Yama– Kala and Mrityu are equivalent to Yama. He is said to be clothed in black who has red eyes, hair and the legs and nose of a crow (the bird of death). He carried a Rod (justice) and noose (the catch of souls)
2) WEST– Varuna– Varuna is consecrated by the gods as lord of rivers and waters. His home is the occan– the home of Makaras. His own decline and growth shall agree with the waning and waking of 'Soma'. He is white and sits surrounded by Adityas in his Palace. He is armed with noose and thunderbolts.
3) NORTH– Kubera– Kubera enjoys guardianship of north and lordship of all treasure. He is Yaksharajan and overlord of Yakshas, Raksasas and Gandharvas. His residence in Kailash– where he sits clothed in jewels, surrounded by many women. Kubera appears to be healthy, pot bellied– whose weapon is club. His attributes are Dhanda, Hemanetra and Pingala.
4) EAST– Indra– Indra son of Aditi became a warrrior through his slaughter of nine nineties of evil kin, thereby obtaining lordship of gods. He has yellow eyes and beard, rides on yellow car with yellow steeds, wears golden chains. red clothes and has two nymphs to fan him when at peace. Indra is armed with bolt and a net. The bolt implies thunder and lightning– as it roars and kills. When the god is anthromorphised, it becomes a Javelin, the bolt also is imagined as a six sided club also as having hundred joints. It is made of bones of Shivite saint-Dadhichi. Indra's charriot is called Yatra Ratha and is drawn by steeds described as golden and peacock coloured one thousand or ten thousand in number.
Indra sometimes uses elephant as alternative vehicle. He fights from a chariot, but uses elephant for more quiet journey.

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Subsidiary Directions

5) SOUTH WEST Sungod or Nirrti.

There is difference in opinion as regards guardian of south east. In later epics, the sungod has been replaced by Nirrti It would therefore be appopriate to identify Nirrti as the guardian of south east. as is more commonly known in Bengal.

Nirrti in fact is one of the Vasus, whose father is Dharma. Some Purana geneology makes Aditi. mother of Vasus. They are alway the bright gods whose cars are light. whose form are like gleaming fire. The sungod or surya bears more elements of divinity than the Vasus. Surya who is white in colour, has a vehicle of charriot with seven horses, holds Padma in both right and left hands alongwith kamandulu and Akshamala in two other hands.

6) NORTH EAST – Moon god or Siva Isana.

While moon god was orginally identified as guardian of north east, the later epics replace it by Sivasana. Isana also appears to be one of the Sadhyas– who are militant gods perfected or being successful in acompanying and fighting for Devas. As fighting gods they even preceed the Maruts. They are also considered as a form of Siva known as Panchabrahmas or Isanadayah.

Soma, the moon god in visualised in white complexion holding weapons of Kumuda and riding on a vehicle of chariot with horses.

7) NORTH WEST Wind god

He is Vayu, Vata, Maruta, Anila or as purified Pavana, as forceful 'Prabhanjana' as bearer of odours, Gandhavaha as constantly in motion– Satataga and Sadagati he has too a vulnerable title of unknown meaning Matarisvan and as messenger of Indra, he is Vasavaduta, Vayu is the life of the world (Jagadaya) and despite his many forms is but one– the soul of all– on whom all depend.

Vayu is typical of freedom– cannot be bound. He has physical power, speed, strength and his attributes of bearing perfumes are the chief charasterstic of Vayu. His roar in battle terrifies the demons. He is Bhutan utman (highest being) and bodiless, the charioteer of Agni and as lord of sound, is born in seven notes of music.

8) SOUTH WEST– Fire God

Agni (Ignis)– son of Anila the wind god. He is described as having seven red tongues, seven red steeds, seven faces, a huge mouth, red neck, tawny eyes (honey coloured), bright gleaning hair and golden seed– the first dispeller of darkness created by Brahma.

Vertical Direction

9) The World above– Brahama

Brahma is the creator and great grandsire. As maker and lord he gives weal and woe to every creature and plays with a man as a boy does with the bird bound by string.

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Brahma having created remains inactive, but he appoints the gods to perform the functions. He himself is not only silent observer because he continues to create. Prajapati despite being a different personality in the earlier epic is himself synonym of Brahma. Prajapati is the truth who created men like gods. He created Vedas, men, gods, demon, worlds, time, other prajapatis— truth, law, austerities, usage, purity and the castes.

Brahma is also a warrior god. He journeys on a vehicle drawn by geese, the gods and seers being his escort. As already stated, Brahma is four faced having four arms and his complexion is reportedly red. He is god of asceticism– he is father of gods and demons and therefore has to act impartially.

10) The world below— Ananta or Sesa Naga

The general abode of the serpents is below earth and here is usually to be found sesa— the naga of thousand months who supports earth from the beneath. As it is endless serpent lying upon the water. it gets the name Ananta.

The above dikapalas are also worshiped as independent deities in keeping with their respective cults and therfore mentioned earlier seperately. Neverthless, when they appear in the role of world protectors, the representations in artworks are generally found in more numbers and in certain cases conceptually integrated in depictions of all the ten seriatim at the same temple.

Some of the Late mediaeval terracotta temples of Bengal having such integrated depictions are as under.

a) Radhavinod Temple —Jaideb Kenduli, Birbhum
b) Siva Temple at Paschimpara— Surul, Birbhum.
c) Gokulchand Temple— Shantipur. Nadia.

12. Jain Tirthankara image— as exception to the common depictions

It is a known fact that Jainisim shares the doctrine of Ahimsa with Bhagvatism and Buddhism and is permeated with the influence of Hinduism, especially of the Krishna cult. The Jains regard Vasudeva and Baladeva as two of their sixty three salaka purusas who are believed to be directors of the course of the world. The legends of Mahavira's birth as known from Jain mythololgy, again appear to be modelled on those of Krishna's birth. The later conception of twenty four forms of Vishnu, on the other hand was very probably initiated from that of the twenty four Jain Tirthankaras. It may be noted that Jain Tirthankara Rishava was regarded by some Bhagavatas as an Avatar of Vishnu.

Jainism in Bengal appeared in the very early phase of history and established its roots in the Rarh region in particular, as evident from religious texts and several Tirthankara black stone images found in different locations of Bengal. We also find one 'Sarbotobhadra' deul dedicated to the divinities of both Jain and Hindu cults at Bankura district.

In terracotta plaques we find appearance of such Tirthankara images at Shyam Rai Temple. Bishnupur, Bankura and elsewhere evidencing high esteem maintained by the common people on such Jain divinities.

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13. Images of demigods like Yaksha, Yakshini, Apsaras etc.

The image of Gandharvas of half bird like, half horse appearance and also their conceptual formations of skilled singers, warriors, proclivity to passionate love and also their appearance in cloud forms were very strong positive depictions in the ancient terracotta art of Bengal. The images of Apsaras, who also as per mythology were born out of Brahman's fancy and were gods' girls, who wore profuse ornaments which tinkle as they welcome saints to heaven. They are also free in love and ordinarily care only for love and play and all of them are deities of love lorn women enjoying themselves in divine sports. They also seduce saints and please gods by jingling their ornaments, revealing their beauties, singing and dancing.

Such images were transformed in folk version to a more down to earth reality and were utilised as subsidiary and supporting motifs of architectural decors and also in certain cases as primary motifs in a very large number of late mediaeval temples of Bengal of which any particular mentions is not considered feasible.

14. Representation of epics

Popular Ramayana and Mahabharata legends appearing as terracotta Art objects.

As we all know, the mythology of the two epics of India represents the real perspective of the Indian philosophy of life and is considered as the phenomenal history of men, gods, spirits, demons, social and political spaces, time, truth, law, austerity, usages, purities, sins, evils and finally wisdom of the people of the great sub continent. Both the epics have shown astounding vitality not only in the years of political dominance of the Hindus, but also the days of invasion, and assimilation of alien people and their cultures.

For over two thousand years the Ramayana like the Mahabharata has been influencing deeply the religious and moral thoughts as well as literary and artistic production in India. As we have it in popular retensions, it represents a literary activity of the Indian mind covering a vast period.

Both the epics belonged to a vast space assimilating the spirit and minds of people of the entire social stratification irrespective of the economic and social status of the people. Right from the highest spiritual life of the people to those in the lower mythological spirits, the common beliefs having respective interpretation of the different episodes of the great epics, generated huge art activities in all forms, which provided breathing space of people in general to find the real meaning of their tradition and existence.

The Ramayana gives a minded picture of a perfect life. Alongwith the ascetics who embarked upon severe discipline, we are always shown the figure of Rama himself towering above them all and honoured by the very ascetics as the special manifestation of the lord for protection of Dharma. We are brought face to face with a series of difficult, baffling and tragic situations and shown how Rama and the other principal characters react to them and ultimately tide over them

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without swearing in the least from the highest principles of spiritual life laid down in the scriptures. Inner perfection issuing out in virtuous action which overcomes evil and transforms the evil door is thus Valmiki's main theme.

Rama appears to be conscious of his divinity at all times althogh he continued to behave like an ordinary man suffering patiently the sorrows that fell to his lot. There is no doubt that Rama's character as a hero and as a man of virtuous action and that of Sita as a model heroine have been instrumental in shaping the lives of many who genuinely aspire after Dharma. Valmiki and various other composers have upheld the ideal of Dharma, which has a comprehensive sweep and which enables its votaries, irrespective of their vocation or status in society, to enjoy inner perfection and freedom while dedicating their virtues to the welfare of others.

On the other hand Mahabharata, represents a whole literature rather than a single homogeneous work. It constitutes a veritable treasurehouse of Indian lore, both secular and religious and no other single work gives an insight into the innermost depths of the soul of the people as it does. It is a song of victory comemorating the deeds of heroism in a war fought to avenge insults to womanhood and to maintain the just rights of a dynasty that extended the heritage of Bharata and knit together the north, east, west and south of India into one empire.

Mahabharata includes the origins of feud, which is stated to have been the denial on the part of one branch of the Kuru race to appropriate the legitimate place of the other. The two brothers Dhritarastra and Pandu were physically handicapped, the one blind and the other was under the curse of a disease that rendered him incapable of begetting children. So Pandu went to the forest with his two wives Kunti and Madri for retreat and died there. Madri ascended his funeral pyre and Kunti returned to the city of Hastinapura with five sons. The sons of Dhritarastra, numbering one hundred one felt jealous of the children of Pandu and started ill treating and harassing them in several ways. Dhritrastra could not reject the claims of the sons of Pandu to a shelter in the royal household. He had to arrange for their training which in those days consisted mostly of the knowledge of and practice in the science of warfare. As the sons of Pandu particularly Bhima and Arjuna excelled in their learning. the sons of Dhritarastra feared them as a source of danger of their supremacy. This was an additional reason of the ill treatment to the Pandavas. In this ill treatment, Duryodhana and Duhsasana the first and second sons of Dhritarastra naturally took a leading part supported by Sakuni, the maternal uncle and Karna a friend of Duryodhana. There were several occassions on which the Pandavas proved their supremacy. For instance, at the time of Panchala princess Draupadi's Swaymbara (election of the husband from the assembly of princes) when they won her hand under the eyes of Kauravas. In appeared then quite clear that Yudhistira would soon be the virtual king of Kuru-Panchala race. The freightend Duryodhana who in consultation with his friends induced Yudhistira to play a game of dice with Sakuni, the expert on his side, so that the later lose in the game everything and would be required to go into exile. The game of dice was lost by Yudhistira and he had to go into exile and further insults were showered upon Draupadi— the common wife of the Pandavas— when she was dragged

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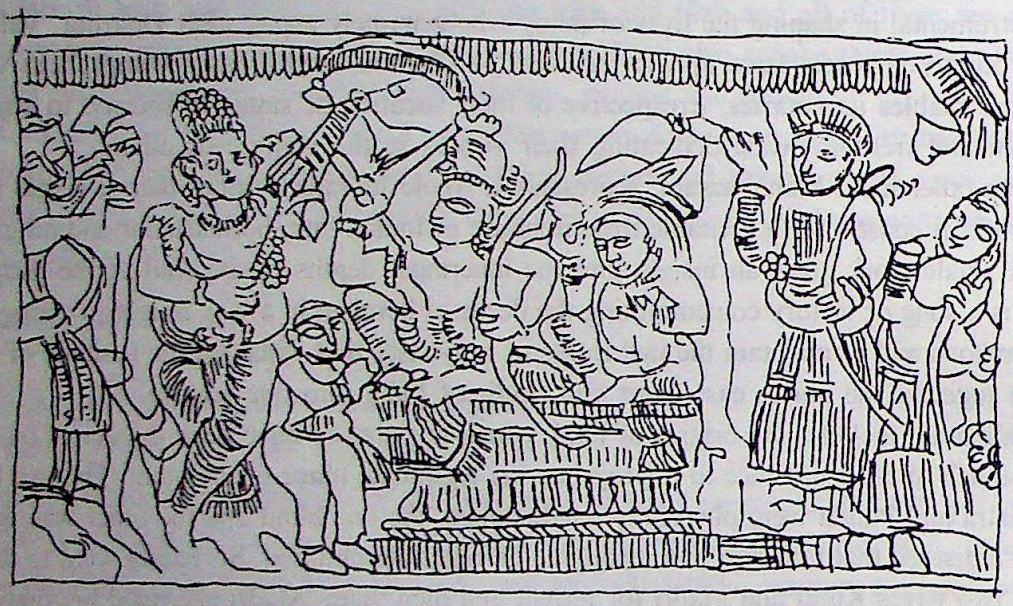
to the courtroom in a scanty dress and was called Dasi (Slave). This naturally enraged Bhima and Arjuna and forced them to vow revenge on the offenders. So, even though they had to go into long exile lasting twelve years for the sake of Yudhistira and remain away onemore year incognito, at the end of the period they demanded their share of the Kingdom. When this demand was refused, they prepared themselves for war, but the great war which lasted for eighteen days, brought a very costly victory to Yudhistira, though he won back the kingdom.



The Royal Court of Rama-Lakshmi Janardan Temple-Surul, Birbhum.

In all the late mediaeval brick temples of Bengal, there had been depictions of Ramayana and Mahabharata episodes either in brief or in details, potrayed in panels, plaques and other forms. It is therefore difficult to incorporate such depictions exclusively and seperately for each of such representations. However some of the special observations of such depictions on sporadic basis are cited hereunder for exhibiting the nature and magnitude of such subject in the sphere of terracotta art of Mediaeval Bengal.

Ramayana tales— Common episodes represented.

a) Rama and Sita on the throne sitting together in the royal court.

b) Different situations of the Lanka war
Rama and Ravana fighting– Ravana is seen as ten headed and also as single headed in some places. Both the armies engaged in war surrounding such central image.

c) The battle between Rama and Indrajit— who is seen fighting from the hideouts of floating clouds.

d) Hanumana flying with Hill Gandhamadana in his hand to cure Lakshmana— slained by Ravana.

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e) The fight between Bali and Sugriva— monkey brothers being claimants of the throne of Kiskindha and Rama/Lakshmana watching the fight from the hideouts.

f) The construction of pavement bridge on the sea connecting Lanka with the Indian soil for a thoroughfare of cavalry movement to Lanka with the help of monkey soldiers.

g) Rama breaking the bows gifted by Siva to win Sita as bride in the royal court of Janaka.

h) Kumbhakarna— the great Rakshasa warlord in his prolonged sleep and Rakshasas around are beating drums and playing flutes to wake him.

i) Rama and Sita going in exile to forest to honour the commitments of Dasaratha— his father.

j) The slain of Marich— the Rakshasa demon in disguise of deer, by Rama to fulfill the desires of his wife Sita.

k) Sita being kidnapped by Ravana though his flying chariot and Jatayu— a divine bird attemping to stop the chariot.

l) Lakshmana desecting the nose of Surpanakha— a Rakshasa woman in disguise of a beautiful woman proposing to marry him.

m) Sita in tears sitting in the Ashoka forest in the custody of Ravana in Lanka and Hanumana revealing his identity by showing the Rama's ring.

n) Sita appearing in Yagna fire as a test of her chastity and gradually going down to Dharitri (mother) bidding farewell to the earth.

o) The four brothers alongwith Sita sitting on the throne of Ayodhaya after winning the Lanka war surrounded by relations, friends and well wishers.

p) Hanumanas in certain war actions, saint Valmiki, Lava-Kusa — sons of Rama after catching hold of Rajsuya horse, etc, have been sporadically displayed in terracotta plaques.

Special observation

a) Potrayal of a war scene depicting a single headed Ravana— who bears the symbol of bull (vehicle of Siva) incised on his bow and Rama holding a bow incised thereupon a symbol of Hanumana (devotion)	Shyama Sundar Temple, Balsi- Bankura.
b) Vultures eating up the dead bodies of Rakshasas after the Lanka war	Siva Temple, Nijabalia, Howrah.
c) Wounded Lakshmana on the lap of Rama	Bhubaneswar Siva Temple, Uttargobindapur, Daspur, Midnapore
d) Ravana discussing war strategies with his generals	Lakshmi Janardan Temple, Surul, Bolpur, Birbhum

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e) Jambhuban and other monkey leaders showing allegiance to Rama-Sita on the throne	Lakshmi Janardan Temple, Surul, Bolpur
f) Saints performing Yagya under the leadership of Valmiki	Lakshmi Janardan Temple, Surul, Bolpur, Birbhum
g) Performing 'Adhibasa'—a marriage ritual before the marriage of Sita	Kantaji Temple, Kantanagar Dinajpore, Bangladesh.
h) Hanumana bent down before Rama in devotion	Abandoned Pancharatna Temple, Balsi— Patrasayer. Bankura
i) Ravana standing in folded hands before Rama.	Charbangla Temple, Barnagar, Murshidabad and Balihar Temple Rajshahi.

Mahabharata episodes

There are certain Mahabharata episodes which are concerning the divine actions of God/ goddesses in the sequence of the narratives of the great war or forming a glossary of the philosophical and theological beliefs or mythologies, which have been frequently appearing on terracotta art works of the temples of late mediaeval Bengal. Before looking into the main legend of the great war, it is desirable to present the said episodes in brief.

i) The fall of river Ganges

Bhagirath a successor of expelled dynasty of King Sagara intensely worshipped Brahma and obtained blessings to the effect that the sins of his predecessors would be extinguished provided he is able to free the river ganges from Siva's hair, where she was being concealed for one hundred thousand years.

River ganges in personified form was the daughter of mountain. Himalaya, usually she is spoken of three fold, three pathed and she being issued from the world of Brahma fell like milk from Mount Meru into the lake of the moon— where her own fall had been created after being uphold for one hunderd thousand years on Sivas head. She is said to be visible and invisible and represented as divided into seven streams, the names of which vary but appear in Mahabharata as Vasvankasara, Nalini, Pavani, Jam bunadi, Sita, Ganga and Sindhu. Is the Ramayana, the Hladini and Sucaksu take the place of first and fourth.

Bhagiratha through his intense worship of Siva could please the god and released the Ganges from his hair and turned into streams as above. As she sank when weary upon the lap of Bhagiratha induced her to come to the earth following the welcome sound of 'Sankha' (conch) played by him with the intention to baptise the bones of Sagara's sons, unless otherwise Sagara's

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sons could not move to heaven. In the process, the ganges did flow following the movement of Bhagiratha taking away all the evils and sins on her way and converged into the ocean— the Bay of Bengal.

A few of the late mediaeval brick temple depicting the theme are as under.

a) Siva Temple— Paschimpara, Surul, Birbhum.
b) Vrindaban Chandra Temple— Konnagar, Ghatal, Midnapore.
c) Jagnnath Temple— Badar, Kespur, Midnapore.
d) Sandhya Temple— Putia, Rajshahi, Bangladesh.
e) Ratneshwar (Pancharatna) Temple— Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murshidabad.

ii) Churning of ocean by the Asuras and Devas.

The gods and the Asuras both claiming immortality during 'Satya' era, decided to produce ambrosia by churning the ocean.

The holy mountain Mandara was selected as the 'Danda' for churning the ocean and the Kashyapa as creative power in the form of tortoise decided to uphold the mountain as 'Danda' on her back. Vashuki, the serpent god acted as chord of the churn, his mouth being held by Asuras and his tail by the gods.

Churning went on for thousand years. Daksayani Devi who stays below earth— whose milk is considered as milky sea and is the mother of four cows of the space namely Surupa, Hamsika, Subhadra and Sarva Kamadugdha— which are divine animals. Her milk united with ocean was churned wherefrom generated Sura, Lakshmi, Dhanwantari— the divine physician, Uccaihsravas, Apsaras, the jewel Kaustava and last of all Ambrosia. The first thing that came out from, it was all destroying poison. The gods being afraid of the dreadful poison withdrew from the churning. Siva in his kindness to the gods took up the poison and swallowed it, but Parvati who was near to his consort did not permit the poison go into the stomach of Siva lest it would kill him. She pressed the throat of Siva and the poison remained there.

When actually the Ambrosia came out, Lord Vishnu in his camofledged female form salvaged the Ambrosia, which resulted to fierce fighting between the Gods and the Asuras. The Gods through their magical powers and deceits defeated the Asuras and Indra continued as the lord of three worlds. The combined hosts of Daityas and Danavas lost the battle and fled into the earth and the sea.

This was a very popular myth found picturisation in the terracotta Art works of the late mediaeval Bengal Temples. some of which are as under.

a) Jaganath Temple— Badar, Keshpur, Midnapore.
b) Laxmi Janardan Temple— Ghoshpur, Keshpur, Midnapore
c) Jhareswar Siva Temple— Kanasole, Keshpur, Midnapore.
d) Raghunath Temple— Dandipur, Ghatal, Midnapore.
e) Radhadamodar Rashmancha— Mangloi, Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore.
f) Char Bangla Temple— Barnagar, Murshidabad.
g) Jor Bangla Temple— Bishnupur, Bankura.
h) Kali Temple— Tarapith, Birbhum.

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III) Anantasayi Vishnu (Vishnu in endless lying)

Sepernts are treated as of divine extraction. The general abode of these divine serpents is below earth who supports earth from beneath. Ananta (Bhagavat) is conceived as an inhabitant of Bhagavati, where he is best of serpents, pannagas, rather than as upholding or entwinning Vishnu. It is the endless serpent lying upon the water that gets the name Ananta (Bhagavat) and is regarded by the later writers as a creation of Vishnu's illusion "lying on the water" like Vishnu himself as Narayana. But this Naga sesa is called also an imferior Deva, moon faced, of a thousand heads, who encircles the world and eventually curls himself over Vishnu.

Anantasayi Vishnu- Raghunathjiu Temple-Ghurisha Birbhum.

The folk verison of the episode became extremely popular and are found in a large number of temple terracottas of the late mediaeval Bengal, a few of which are as under.

a) Radhadamodar Temple,— Hadalnarayanpur,Patrasayar, Bankura
Damodar Temple and Rash mancha –do–
b) Radhadamodar Temple— Talmandi, Garbeta, Midnapur.
c) Laxmi Varaha Temple— Bagrui, Keshpur, Midnapore.
d) Damodar Temple — Balipota, Daspur, Midnapore.
e) Raghunath Temple— Sridharpur, Daspur, Midnapore
f) Siva Temple— Ilambazar, Birbhum
g) Raghunathjiu Temple— Ghurisha, Birbhum

IV) The battle of Sunda and Upasunda— the Asuras

Hiranya Kashipu was reborn as Shisupala— in whose dynasty were born Sunda and Upasunda— Mahasuras. These brothers became too strong and with the ambition to become the overlord of three worlds, they intensiely worshiped lord Brahma and prayed for immortality. Brahma blessed them immortality subject to the fact that they are mortal only in the hands of each other of the two.

The blessing induced Sunda-Upasanda to drive the vehicle of opression on the gods, Yakshas, Nagas and the also on the rest of others in existence, enslaved wagas and killed the saints.

To overcome the situation, Brahma ordered Viswakarma to create a beautiful women, with a view to seduce Sunda-Upsunda. The women would ignite their way to self destruction.

Accordingly Tilottama was created with the fancy of God with all the images of beauty and attraction. Looking to such creation Indra and Brahma himself became thousand eyed and four faced, respectively, as she seems to seduce the demons.

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Her immediate appearance in front the Sunda-Upsunda created instinctual boost and they became jealous to each other. They forgot each other and caused their own destruction. The episode has been skillfully potrayed on various terracotta plaques of late mediaeval Bengal temples, some of which are as under.

a) Vishnu Temple— Gosai Bajar, Chandrakona, Midnapore.
b) Kali Temple— Barnagar, Murshidabad.
c) Jora Bangla Temple— Bishnupur, Bankura.
d) Ananta Vasudev Temple— Bansberia, Hooghly
e) Ram chandra Temple— Guptipara, Hooghly
f) Pratapeswar Temple— Ambika Kalna, Bardhaman.

V) Other Common Mahabharata episodes represented

a) Arjuna striking the target of the eye of fish at the Swayambara of Draupadi.
b) The dice play between Duryodhana and Yudhistira with the object of implicating Pandavas.
c) Draupadi being declothed in the open court by Duhsashana second son of king Dhritarastra. The scene being witnessed by Pandavas and lord Krishna coming to rescue.
d) The elaborate scenes of the great epic war of Kurukshetra.
e) Arjuna's apathy to war against elders and kins and lord Krishna as charioter counselling him with his destiny and philosophy of Geeta.
f) Grand father Bhisma lying in death bed of arrows at the Kurukshetra war ground and Arjuna feeding him with divine water derived through his powerful arrow from the Ganges for tranquility of his soul.
g) Abhimanyu— son of Arjuna fighting out seven distinguished charioters of Kaurav army.
h) The battle between Bhima and Duryodhana with club as exclusive weapon at the end of Kurukshetra war.
i) The five Pandavas on their ultimate journey to the heaven accompanied by Dharma in the form of dog.
j) Karna— the great hero at the moment of his slain by Arjuna, while his chariot stopped moving and Karna trying to make it move.

VI) Special observations

a) The assasination of Vrishaketu by Karna	Laxmi Varaha Temple Bagrui, Keshpur, Midnapore
b) Narayana fighting theriomorphic image of elephant turtle combine	Jagannath Temple Badar, Keshpur, Midnapore
c) Lakshmi being born out of churning of ocean	Jagannath Temple, Badar Keshpur, Midnapore.
d) Assasination of Ashwathama	Kali Temple, Tarapith, Birbhum
e) Duryodhana and Arjuna waiting for Krishna to wake up for mobilising support of Krishna for Kurukshetra war	Gopinath Temple Dasghara, Hooghly

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15. The socio ecnonomic and cultural traits

i) The social stratification

The mediaeval social problems of Bengal were essentially deviations from the ideal situation and were caused by pathologial social conditions. The Muslim aggression brought about lasting changes in the social stratification and the changes occurred imparted different interpretation of the behavioural pattern of the people. When viewed in the context of social values and institutions the deleterious situation warranted readjustment or remedy by the necessary social actions, which were eventually absent. The imminent problems were essentially moral problems and the crisis was a moral crisis attributable to the contemporary society itself and may be viewed as an impulse of the historical movement.

A continuous wave of migration spread across the plains, emergence of new elites, existence of fatalism among the people attributing everything to destiny, selfish, brutal and exploitative state machinery, wickedness of the proliferating lineages of the early settlers and well upstart indigenous people generated injurious consequences to group process and social relationships. The new layers of authority subordinated the village dwelling Zamindars. The small isolated and homogeneous villages which had been maintaining a strong sense of group solidarity with a very low mobility were exposed to maladjustments and conflicts due to structural changes in the spiritual, political and revenue administration. The central authority at the urban settlements during the Muslim empires of Bengal seemed always to have been able to enforce substantial transfer of resources to itself. The imperial Mughals resorted to a hierarchical or bureaucratic model with the prevalence of the system of flowing orders from imperial capital and revenue to it retaining however the entrenched land holding elites unaffected. Initially the disorganisation at the rural communes even sometimes leading to anonymity did not however interrupt the unconcern of the rulers who were apparently committed to extinguish the difference between the state and religion as well as expansion of the religious brotherhood. Due to recurrent contradictions in the social systems the rulers at a later stage attempted to integrate the institutions working at cross purposes, allowing however the triangular encounter between state, local empires and the Zamindars to continue.

Muslims at the initial stage of their rule settled initially at the Garrison towns and then moved out in the rural areas as they received grant of land from the Muslim rulers. Gradually they could obtain their footings in the countryside having been able to achieve success through campaign against the local power centers. In course of time they were able to turn imperial service to their good advantage and gathered large estates. Despite such factors they failed to accelerate the social change as they initially contemplated and after centuries of Muslim rule they shared at maximum one fourth of the total land in any district.

The multiplication of interests and functions including different castes and classes within the erstwhile Hindu community who had been reduced in wealth and importance led to normlessness, role conflict, social conflicts and demoralization. Changes in the basic conditions of life, breakdown of the traditional norms resulted in widespread discontentment and disillussionment. The rulers wished to control the disposition of the produce but left the lands in the possession of land to

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Two indigenous soldiers— Pancha Ratna Temple-Putia, Rajshahi

Indigenous soldiers marching ahead-Jorbangla Temple-Bishnupur Bankura.

the former inhabitants who were constrained to live intermingled, but stratified vertically with the group of conquerors at the top and the oldest hardly distinguishable from the common cultivators.

Agricultural pursuits were supplemented by crafts production in the economic units of the wholly agricultural villages comprised ordinary artisans and cultivating castes. Zamindars as quasi proprietors of the land effectively controlled their large settlements imparting primarily inalienable and hereditary rights of occupancy to resident cultivators against commitments for a share of surplus produce denoted in terms of revenue assessed on the land, sometimes retaining however a very small portion for cultivation through hired labours Zamindar either acted as a separate impost on the cultivator as revenue payer to the state on the lands under his Zamindari or as collector on behalf of the state against a remission from the local revenue payable to state. Though apparently they did have only bare material benefits, they enjoyed their coveted position due to the power delegated upon them which sometimes fostered and encouraged unwarranted exploitation on the cultivators to earn fortune. Besides land revenue the Zamindars also derived certain petty perquisites including taxes on trade and forest products, etc, and also customary presents from the cultivators. Nevertheless a section of such old and traditional village dewlling hereditary Zamindars despite such faculties used to maintan their emotionally toned positive commitments to the soil and shared the common platform of culture and destiny in their settlements.

The material culture did not change even after the British occupation, who with their intrusive bureaucracy could not put any positive qualitative change in the social stratification dominated by the rural elites. The proprietorship of land being diverted to different sets of beneficiaries under the Permanent Settlement Regulations promulgated in 1793 though changed the equilibrium of forces in the rural Bengal through denial of due rights of the cultivators and replacement of the old established landholding families by new sets of urban dweller beneficiaries with tainted background, there had been value conflicts incompatible with collectivism, compromise, sacrifice and adjustment attached to the retained tradition of the soil. The situation changed the basic conditions of life. A race among the new social statuses incoherent with the traditional flavour disrupted the integration and equilibrium of culture and caused with the traditional flavour disrupted the integration and equilibrium of culture and caused a cultural lag, which can also be traced in the art and literary resources during the era.

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The political consideration underlying the regulations was the creation of a class of vested interests from among natives of the country which would act as the bulwork of the British empire in India. The economic consideration was the necessity of an adequate provision for the finanical needs of the company. to enable it to defray the expenditure of great military and civil establishments of the company as also to pay dividend to the proprietors of the company.

First of all, the British assumed that the Government was the owner of all property and secondly they transferred to the zamindars the supposed proprietory right as if the cultivators were nobody and had therefore no right to hold the land. Their position was relegated to that of mere tenants at will under zamindars. It had been a long history of terrible suffering and painful miseries before the cultivators' most essential right on against zaminders were first recognised by the government.

The efforts of the Permanent Seltlement as said by T.R.E Holmes (p-12. History of Indian Mutiny) "The permanent settlement was a sad blunder. The inferior tenants derived from it no benefit whatever. The zamindars again and again failed to pay their rent charges and their estates were sold for the benefit of the government."

Here lies the disastrous effects of the settlement being enforced when the traditional zamindars who were the centres of gravity of the rural life of Bengal were forced to part with their ancestral rights to the new proprietors who were mostly city dwellers having tainted economic and social backgrounds and earned fortunes through unethical means or in unscruplous alliance with the company's servants. They did not have any root on the soil of rural Bengal and continued to neglect their estates—which were doomed to disappointment of the ordinary cultivators. The social bonds in the rural Bengal stratification of classes were exposed to a crisis— so long unprecedented. The well knit rural communes thereafter had segmentary forms of social organisations dominated by classes of people with a lesser degree of esteem or regard to the age old traditions. Zamindars as city dwellers were least concerned to maintenance of traditions and eventually the same in the nineteenth century Bengal came into the hands of rich merchants or traders who did not have the extent of maturity or devotion of the traditionally enlightened hereditary zamindar families hitherto dominating the scenario.

In the social stratifications the caste system continued to remain as a crucial factor altogether influencing the rural life of Bengal. Practically a caste or sub caste in an endogamous social group. An investigation of smaller castes easily shows by the method of genealogy that every member of the group is related to each other. So we have to view caste as an extension of family, the principle of grouping appears to be blood bond and relationship through marriage.

A caste being basically a regional unit, comprises, people who generally follow one type of profession. When there is a change in professional technique or division of labour, people following each type of activity within a profession tend to form themselves into endogamous units or castes.

Within these primary classes there are ranks, sometimes tacitly agreed to by all, sometimes disputed. Among the Brahmans, each sub caste considers itself the highest—a claim not countenanced by the others. Among the ruling kayasthas, some class also are supposed to be

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higher than the others and so on. Among the artisans, those who work in gold and silver hold themselves higher than those who work in brass and copper, who again pretend to be higher than the black smiths. The great weaver castes are higher than black smiths and carpenter, but below the braziers and goldsmiths. Among the agriculturists, some tiers have been claimed placing cowherds and shephards the next. Below these and the lowest are innumerable semi primitive, semi tribal people who were gradually absorbed into the great mass of agriculturists. The greatest distance was however demanded by the Brahmans.

The functions as regards similar small groups as a regulator of marriage and as a repository and jealous guardian of arts and crafts are perceptible. It divided the whole population of Bengal into mutually exclusive, competitive communities and the trade unionism in caste has both enhanced and marred the arts and crafts of Bengal. The hereditary transmission of certain skills has made artisanship and real art into almost an instinctive habit in certain castes. The caste stratification worst of all, kept the mases jelously away from the commentaries and elucidations of the great cultural traditions and creativities of the new genre and they had to assimilate the same through bards and story tellers. No social device for the preservation and transmision of culture can compare with the institution of caste— none exists either in which stagnation and social antagonism can arise to the extent they do in this system. Much of the diversity of Bengali life is due to the caste system, which jealously guarded and conserved its peculiar moves, denied small cultural streams within its narrow limits and was a barrier to free intercourse and cultural assimilation.

Every new invasion, every new dynasty strengthened the caste loyalties. The system grew for over a millenium. Neither Buddhism nor Jainism could shake it. They only created new castes. Muslims with their ideas of forcible conversion was so strange and so repulsive to the general Hindu mind that the whole population drew farther back into the caste shell. The same fate met Christianity.

The political necessity and also due to the versatile contributions of the onslaught of Bhakti movement with the institution of Chaitanya cults led to an epoch making co operation of various castes towards creating a common life in Bengal in 16th /17th Century AD which also turned superficial after the lapse of about two centuries. People lived together to work together for generations bound to the soil within a small compass, compelled to work together, but divided for ever by castes stratified into higher and lower ranks.

ii) The Zamindari style of Life— a leisured aristocracy

The Bengal zaminders like other wealthy Indian landholders devoted much of their time and energy to the prosecution of law suits, the pursuit of personal honours and titles and an ostentatious display in adornment and amusement. None of this won them praise from the Mughal or British rulers. Yet these various activities defined for the Zamindars a coherent way of life, and one well adapted to making good the position in the world they felt to be theirs.

The central feature of the zamindari life during the British regime was the quest for marks of British favour. These included even such seemingly inconsequential matters as the seating

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arrangements, and order of presentation, at audiences with the Lieutenant governor or Viceroy, scrutinised by the zamindars for clues as to their standing with the authority. Ordinary zaminders had to work hard to get the titles in a hierarchy of titles including prestigious hereditary title of Raja, which they coveted. Behaviour was continuously scrutinised to see whether it met the standard.

The zamindars asserted their status in society even through building and patronising of temples, hospitals and other works for charitable purpose. The zamindars' role as patrons at times parhaps reluctant, was found in western education. They supported mostly the cause of Hindu or Muslim institutions which became more congenial and more traditionally accepted enterprise. Indeed the endowment of a temple had long been accustomed way an aspirant land holder laid claim to a higher status.

The composite character of the zaminder's culture naturally inclined them whether Hindu or Muslim toward a tolerant view of religious affiliation. Even after they had begun to identify more closely with their own religious community, they still participated in the other's festivals and refrained from censorious judgements.

Despite their status, few zamindars were very learned. However they sometimes had shown keen interest in history, mythology and poetic composition and sometimes kept someone of them on estate payroll. But drawn away by the estate management and other interests, the zamindari creativity did not persevere very long nor did they win applause outside the circle of their dependents and admirers.

The zaminders were renowned for other eccentricities. The eccentricity took varied forms- from miserliness to profligacy, sensual indulgence to obsessive religiousity, lethargic seclusion to a punctitious concern with the winding of clocks.

The zamindari dress was also marked by extravagance. The magnificient costumes were primarily intended perhaps to impress the British and other zamindars into the wearer's wealth and position. The construction of buildings, above all palatial residences was a popular and costly Zamindari pastime. In this both European and Nawabi models provided inspiration. Imposing ceremonial gateways were a common feature of the residences of all zamindars, who could afford them. So too were the grouping of offices and living quarters around a central courtyard and the strict seperation of the quasi public and formal areas including guest rooms and often an apartment for the zaminder himself from the private family quarters.

The zamindars also exhibited extravagance in their entertainments which involved lavish expenditures for sponsoring music and dance— which very often supported the boost of creativities of the unexplored talents. Nevertheless they did also sometimes maintain trails for perversive or instinctual entertainments in the personal lives— which patronised the fortunes of public women and developed various intoxication habits. Various artistic and extensively decorated smoking gadgets were in use— which in fact became symbols of their status and dignity. They also resorted to lavish entertainments for European visitor and accomodated their increasingly Europianized life style. The interior section usually remained the domain of women and of family life.

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The zamindars too were devoted to outdoor sports, Shikar (hunting) above all else. No doubt this was partly a mark of their gentry style. During British Raj they shared such sport with those equally enthusiastic Shikaris (hunters)– the resident British. But shooting was as well an inheritance from their more martial forbears, perhaps even a way of recapturing some of the spirit of those challenging days. Zamindars usually took their guns along on tours of their estates, and found or made opportunity for sport in the intervals of inspecting villages. Those whose estates extended into the Terai jungles, where big game was to be found, were of course exceptionally keen, often mounting tiger hunting expeditions each year.

Zamindar on pleasure trip on a palanquin-Radhagobinda Temple-Chechua Govindanagar,-Daspur, Midnapur.

Lavish expenditure on rituals and ceremonies was as much a part of a zamindars' life as shikari In this, of course, he differed little from the ordinary Bengali people other than in having a much greater amount of money to spend.

The daily routine of the zamindars contained almost leisure by inclination and the day starting with morning rituals continued with attending Kachari to transact the estate business, amusements, visits to gardens, joy ridings, sports but concluded frequently with night given over to music—both vocal and instrumental.

Neverthless, the zamindars remained too deeply embedded in their own society and in the cultural values of that society, to take up the ways of the English landed gentry. The Mughal

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style gate-ways, palaces, durbars, the fawning of courtiers though but a pale reflection of a world lost, still kept alive a sense of awe and deference which fed zamindari pride and power.

All the social phenomenons were indicated in the motifs, form and potrayals of the terracotta decorations of the late mediaeval Bengal temples. At the earlier phase of the architecural activities the hereditary artists identified as a distinct social tier, did have little scopes to represent their own creative urges depicted on such ornamentation and was required to adhere to the canonical norms meticulously. Neverthless at a later stage due to changes in the social leadership in the nineteenth century, we find effloroscence of their common ideas and perceptious reflected in greater quantums on such terracotta ornamentation, despite a decline in the aesthetic qualities of such works.

Some of the special observation in this regard are mentioned hereunder.

i) Daily Life

a) An affluent man with an umbrella on head carried by his servant	Janakiballav Temple, Tilantapara, Sabang, Midnapore
b) Man riding on a date palm tree for extracting sap—	Gopinath Temple, Radhakantapur, Daspur, Midnapore
c) An oldman carrying an old woman or shoulder	Raghunath Tample, Sridharpur Daspur, Midnapore
d) Mother and child	Raghunath Temple, Sridharpur, Daspur, Radhagobindajiu Temple Antpur, Hooghly
e) A convict being punished by throwing in front of a hungry Tiger	Tulsimancha, Gambhirnagar, Ghatal, Midnapore
f) A chained prisoner escorted by guards	Sinhavahini Temple, Nabagram, Ghatal, Midnapore
g) Zamindaris court attended by officials	Damodar Temple. Bahirgarh, Hooghly Vishnu Temple– Mamudpur, Goghat, Hooghly. Gopinath Temple, Songaluk, Arambagh, Hooghly.
h) Marriage scene showing ritual transfer of a Bengali bride to groom	Deul at Mathurapur, Faridpur. Bangladesh.
i) Man riding rhinocerous	Sridhara Temple, Rajgram, Bankura.
j) Man riding Camel	Hattala Temple, Ilambajar, Birbhum.
k) Bhairava riding Tiger	Sridhara Temple, Rajgram, Bankura.
l) Banadurga riding on the branch of a tree	Sridhara Temple, Rajgram Bankura.
m) Festive procession	Bhavaniswari Devi Temple Mahishamuri, Amta, Howrah.
n) Woman cutting fish	Vishalakshi Temple, Arambagh, Hooghly

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o) Woman spinning threads in 'Charka'	i) Gopinath Temple, Dasghara Hooghly ii) Damodarjiu Temple Kalyanpur, Bagnan, Howrah iii) Kantaji Temple (since abolished)– Kantanagar Dinajpur, Bangladesh
p) Housewife processing rice through Dheki	Damodarjiu Temple, Kalyanpur, Bagnan. Howrah, (Since abolished)
q) Washerman washing clothes	-do-
r) Black smith hammering heated iron	-do-
s) Barbar dressing hair	-do-
t) Prostitutes in erotic practices	-do-
v) Wrestlers in sporting action	i) Shyam Rai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura ii) Sridharnathjiu Temple, Asanda, Howrah iii) Damodarjiu Temple, Khalna, Amta, Howrah
u) Tribal Acrobats	Madangopaljiu Temple Melak, Howrah.

ii) Leisured Aristocracy of Zaminders

a) Zamindar in transit on a Palanquin escorted by officials Servants and hunter dogs	Radhagobinda & Radharaman Temple– Gobindapur, Daspur, Midnapore.
b) Zamindar travelling in a Palanquin being engaged in smoking with a smoking gadget	Gopinath Temple— Daspur, Midnapore
c) Aristocrat men probably zamindars in Western costumes	Simhabahini Temple, Paikpari Debra, Midnapore.
d) Zamindar leisurely smoking with smoking gadgets surrounded by accomplices	Raghunath Temple, Dandipur, Ghatal, Midnapore, Sitaramjiu Temple, Rautara, Howrah.
e) Zamindar hunting in shelter of a palanquin	Raghunath Temple, Dandipur, Ghatal, Midnapore
f) Idle luxuriant Zamindar relaxing with Palenquin	Sridharjiu Temple, Asanda, Howrah. Dadhimadhab Temple, Amaragari, Howrah.
g) Zamindar holding falcon for luxary	Kantaji Temple, Dinajpur, Bangladesh.
h) Zaminder surrounded by Sychophants on a pleasure boat sailing	i) Kantaji Temple, Dinajpur, Kantanagar. Bangladesh ii) Sitaramjui Tmple, Rautara Howrah. iii) Damodarjiu Temple Marghurali, Jagatballavpur, Howrah
h) Zamindar flying pigeons	Shyamrai Temple. Bishnupur, Bankura

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iii) Reflection of the governace or defence machineries

The activities of law and order maintenance and military movements of solidiers were also well represented in the temple terracotta decorations of late mediaeval Bengal, a few of which are mentioned as under.

a) Indigenous soldiers with Swords and shields	i) Sive temple at Surul, Birbhum ii) Damodarjiu Temple, Dakshinmaju, Jagatballavpur, Howrah.
b) Procession of Mughal Soldiers	i) Ratneswar (Pancharatna) Temple Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murshidabad ii) Radhagobinda and Radharamanjiu Temple, Gobindapur, Daspur, Midnapore
c) Mughal soldiers on march with flags fastoons etc.	Lokeshwar Siva Temple, Bhitargarh, Mayna, Midnapore
d) Fighting horserider cavalries with indigenous weapon	Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura.

(iv) Hunting scenes— the most common motif in terracotta ornamentation.

Special observations

a) Hunters persuing the running deers	Vrajakishore Temple— Purushottampur Daspur, Midnapore
b) Camelrider beating drums to drive out the deers	Janakiballav Temple, Tilantapara, Sabang, Midnapore.
c) European horseriding hunter with a gun hunting deers	i) Janakiballav Temple, Tilantapara Sabang Midnapore. ii) Dadhimadhab Temple Amaragari, Howrah.
d) Horserider hunting crocodile in water	Radhagobinda Temple, Chaipat, Daspur, Midnapore
e) Elephantrider hunter carrying guns	Radhagobinda & Radharamanjiu Temple Gobindapur, Daspur, Midnapore
f) Englishmen hunters armed with guns and in hunting action	i) Sitanath Temple, Kararpara Jhikhira, Howrah ii) Sitalananda Siva Temple Hattala, Khirpai, Midnapore
g) Hunter attacked by a Tiger	Tulshimancha, Gambhirnagar Ghatal, Midnapore
h) Two hunters riding horses for hunting deers and Boars	do

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i) Scenes of tiger, crocodile & deer hunting
j) Horseriding hunter with Javelin in hand

Jagannath Temple, Badar Keshpur, Midnapore
i) Sitaramjiu Temple, Rautara, Amta, Howrah.
ii) Shyamsundarjiu Temple, Madhyapara, Jhikhira, Howrah

v) The creeper of death — The motif was popular in the construction of brick temples of Bengal. It represents a verticular arrangement on the coloumns in the rear projections, having a facade row of remarkably sculptured figures of hunting actions, horse or elephants with warrior riders and retinue and other animal figures of the hunt— which reveal series of animal or human killings or death. Some of the temples having such ornamentation are as under.

i) Laljiu Temple— Ambika Kalna, Bardhaman.
ii) Sridharjui Temple— Asanda, Udainarayanpur, Howrah.
iii) Radha Damodar Temple— Hadalnarayanpur Patrasayar Bankura.
iv) Gopinath Temple— Dasghara. Dhaniakhali, Hooghly.
v) Radhagobinda Temple— Antpur. Hooghly

16. Dwarpals or Dwarpalikas, Drummers and Musicians

Particularly at the later stage, it turned out to be a practice to install large sized solid sculptures, of Dwarpalas or Dwarpalikas of course with less aesthetic merit besides the doorways of the temples or Rashmanchas, appearing in large numbers in the districts of Midnapore, Hooghly, and Howrah. Similar such installations of drummers or musicians are also found in several cases showing actions by males or females in beating drum or playing musical instruments. The installation of such sculptures besides the entry gates was probably intended to welcome or to celebrate the purported entry of deities worshipped on some special occassions or the devotees intending to pay homage to the god. The practice is evident when the art of terracotta was at a stage of decline and the mixed medium of stucco and terracotta ornamentation came in vogue. Such solid images of large size were mostly blunt, neverthless representing a specific trend which deserves mention.

Some of the cases of such decoration are as under.

Dwarpalas/Dwarpalikas

i) Rashmancha— Gopalpur (Patashpur) and Dihibaliharpur (Daspur) Midnapore.
ii) Rashmancha— Kismat Narajole (Daspur), Midnapore.
iii) Octagonal Temple of De family— Gayenpara, Khirpai, (Chandrakona,) Midnapore
iv) Siva Temple— Kharor, (Ghatal,) Midnapore
v) Tulshimancha— Goaltore, (Garbeta), Midnapore
vi) Banka Rai Temple— Jaikrishnapur (Debra), Midnapore.
vii) Dharmaraj Temple— Dalapatipur, (Ghatal), –do–

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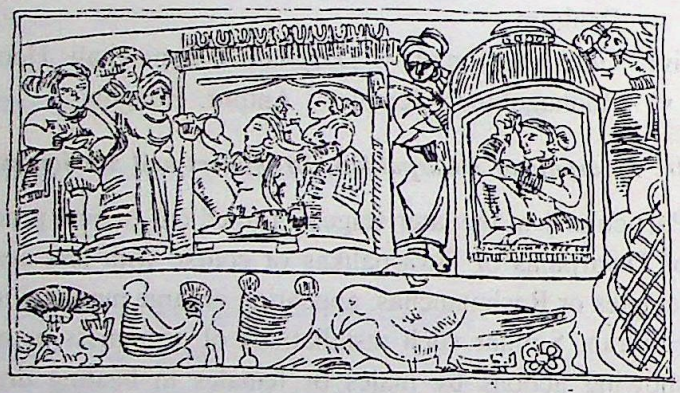
Drummers/Musicians

i) Rashmancha— Ajuria (Daspur) Midnapore
ii) Brindaban Behari Jiu Temple— Eroti (Daspur) Midnapore.
iii) Radhamadhab Temple— Gopalpar. (Patashpur) Midnapore
iv) Rashmancha— Gaura (Daspur) Midnapore.
v) Sridharjiu Rasmancha— Palaspai (Daspur) Midnapore.
vi) Damodar Rashmancha— Bhairavpur (Chandrakona) Midnapore.
vii) Brindabanchandra Rashmancha— Ramkrishnapur, Daspur, Midnapore.
viii) Shyamsundar Rashmancha— Saulan (Daspur), Midnapore
ix) Sridharjiu Rashmancha— Hare Krishnapur (Punskura), Midnapore
x) Narayana Temple— Deriapur (Garbeta) Midnapore.

Women beautifying themselves-Radhamadhab Temple-Joydev Kenduly Birbhum.



Women busy in interior household-Lakshmi Janardan Temple at Surul, Birbhum.

17. Role of women

In the traditional Indian way of life, there is a general misconception that the ideals of Indian women are entirely different from, nay even opposed to those of men. It is perfectly true that as mothers, as creations and sustainers of life on earth, women have some special duties to perform, some special paths to follow, But these by no means lower the dignity and status or narrow down their roles or ideals. On the contrary these infinitely elevate and enliven them. Hence apart from these special aims, rights and duties, the ideals of Indian women are very much the same as those of Indian men. Women traditionally equally manifested themselves in all walks of life, domestic, social and spiritual. Women in India have recognised two main ideals viz. Brahmavadini and that of a Sadyovadhu. A Brahmavadini is of an ascetic type striving for highest philosophical knowledge, knowledge of truth, of the self, of Brahman. A Sadyovadhu, on the other hand is of a domestic type, dedicating herself to the welfare of the family, and spending her time mostly in domestic duties of an ordinary kind. Such women also continued to remain of high spiritual nature, even in the midst of multifarious domestic duties.

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During the middle ages when foreign invasions took place, the position of women turned worst in history. As the defeated subjects at the outset, there had been several prohibitions, bonds and discriminations which were caused to the women by the social elites lossing their political and economic authorities. It gradually contracted the sphere of openness in the Indian womanhood, so in Bengal.

Married women used vermillion. Women also used turmeric, saffron, kajjala, betel, auspicious ornaments and articles for keeping the hair in order. In the mediaeval Bengal, women used to appear in public without veils and did wear attractive costumes with decorations of choice.

While she was the mainstay of the domestic life and source of happiness, she worked hard like a labour, offered food like a mother and gave advice like a counseller in adversity. They did not seem to have suffered any ritual prohibitions or disablities. Historically, in the Bengali houses the young girls danced and sang with great skill. Dancing was to the accompaniment of musical instruments such as tambourines, cymbals, reeds, flutes and drums with their brazen sounding boxes. Many Bengali women were well known for their skill in music and dancing and are said to have displayed her accomplishment in public.

Sacred motherhood -Gopinathjiu Temple-Atpur, Hooghly.

Life of women appears to be a very attractive subject of depiction of the terracotta artists of Bengal, who had displayed their intimate care in potrayal of various scenes in the life of women in the teracotta plaques or panels of the late mediaeval Bengal temples.

A few of such observations are as under:–

Domestic scenes

1) Woman fluting a conchsell	Smihavahini Temple Paikpari (Debra), Midnapore
2) Women feeding a parrot	–do–
3) Woman spining threads on a Charka	Gopinath Temple. Dasghara, Hooghly
4) Woman serving at the feet of an ascetic	Jhareswar Siva Temple– Kanasole, Midnapore
5) Hair dressing of a woman	Lakshmi Janardan Temple Kushpata, Gobindapur, (Ghatal), Midnapore
6) Linga worship of a woman	Radha damodar & Sitala Temple, Khirpai, Midnapore
7) Woman palying vina	Gopinath Temple, Dasghara, Hooghly
8) Women playing violin	Rameshwar Temple. Rajnagar (Panskura), Midnapore

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9) Woman standing with pitcher	Siva Temple (Deul), Ilambajar Birbhum
10) Woman in the interiors beautifying themselves	Laxmi Janardan Temple, Surul Bribhum
11) Bathing woman	Chandranath Siva Temple Hetampur, Birbhum
12) Dancing woman	i) Diwanji Siva Temple Hetampur, Birbhum ii) Pratapeswar Temple, Kalna, Bardhaman iii)Radhagobinda Temple, Antpur Hooghly
13) Detailed Potraiture of women looking outward from the interiors	i) Siva Deul of Surul, Bolpur, Birbhum ii) Damodar Temple, Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer,Bankura. iii) Radhagobinda & Radharaman Temple Gobindapur, Daspur, Midnapore
14) Very old woman with shattered skin	Rameshwar Temple Rajnagar Bankura
15) Woman standing besides the door	Gobindeswar Temple, Seuri, Birbhum.
16) Woman standing with an umbrella in hand	Rashmancha Kumarpur, Jagatballavpur, Howrah
17) Washerwoman washing clothes	Damodarjiu Temple Kalyanpur, Bagnan, Howrah
18) House wife, processing rice through Dheki	do

18. Foreign Traders and Slave Trading

Several European nations arrived in Bengal during mediaeval times primarily for the purpose of trade and commerce, besides the other hidden motives, which sometimes took the shape of political ambition. The foreigners were militarily strong mercenaries having all coercive or deceptive traits with the exclusive aim resource plundering, and had close economic and social interactions with the people of Bengal particularly at the river bank areas. Such interactions became the part of life of the common people of Bengal and made their own reflections in the contemporary art and literature. While some of the potrayals through terracotta art are being mentioned hereinafter, it is felt expedient to put forward a brief account of the background of the European nations who invaded Bengal for economic and political reasons, for the sake of better apprehension of such potrayals on the late mediaevel temples.

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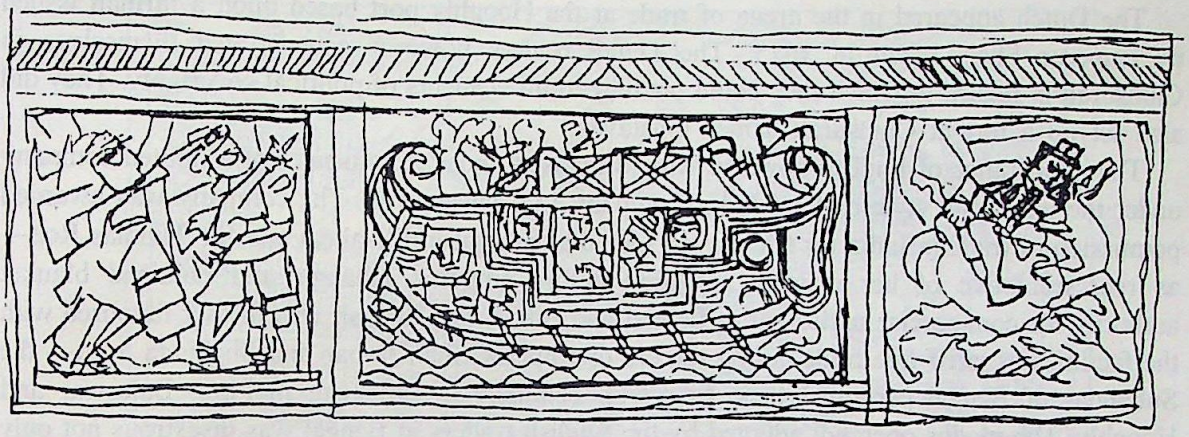

Europien ship and Soldiers-Shyamsundarjiu Temple-Jhikhira-Howrah.

The commercial venture of the Portuguese people was first materialised in the year of 1517 AD with the permission of the indigenous Mughal rulers. The immense commercial potential as laid down by Vasco da Gama 'Benguala has a Moorish king and a mixed population of christmas and moors. Its army may be about twenty four thousand strong, ten thousand being cavalry, the rest infantry with four hundred elephants. The country could export quantities of wheat and very valuable cotton goods. Cloths which sell on the spot for twenty two shillings and six pence fetch ninety shillings in Calicut. It abounds in silver" induced them to make organised efforts and in launching trade through Chittagong (Porto grande) and Saptagram (Porto Paqueno). The commercial route through the course of the river 'Ganges', 'Saraswati', had certain material changes in the late 16th century AD, which caused shifting of their base form Saptagram to Hooghly. Pedro Tavazes— a Portuguese captain obtained a 'farman'from emperor 'Akbar' in 1579-80 and made a commercial base as well as a strong settlement in Hooghly. Neverthless, the Portuguese did not remain confined in commercial activities exclusively and sooner started flouting the stipulation of the farman conferred upon them by the Mughals. They violated all the established norms and trade practices riding a roughshod to all formal or ethical codes. In the name of trade, they started hooliganism plundering, rampant slave trading, forced religious conversions and in every sense introduced a parllel administrative machinery though setting up Zamindari and earrying on ruthless exploitation. Even at one point of time, they stopped payment of revenues to the Mughals. The local population suffered the agonies and opression of such unscruplous and ruthless merceneries. The foreign invaders took the full advantage of absence of elaborate adminstrative network of the Mughals at the bottom and the military unpreparedness of the local administration to fight back the opression. The superior naval technology of the foreigners also added to their potential for manouvering the things in their favour. The unabated terror however continued till 1637 AD, when Kashim Khan the Governor of Bengal invaded the Hooghly fort and destroyed the Portuguese settlement there.

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The Dutch appeared in the arena of trade at the Hooghly port based upon a farman issued by emperor Shah Jahan in 1625. The Dutch traders however concentrated themselves in Chinsurah in regard to which they could obtain certain elements of political soverignty. They did also set up a fort at Chinsurah named Gustavas.

The appearance of English however was formalised under the auspices of a limited company under the name and style of East India Company Ltd. since 1599. The company was awarded permission of trade in India for fifteen years by the then queen Elizabeth and Sir Thomas Roe— as represeentative of her majesty appeared before emperor Jahangir and obtained blanket authority for commercial settlement in Bengal and Bihar. The English was further favoured with the facilities of tariff free trade during the era of emperor Shah-Ja-han and Shahjada Suja— the Subahdar of Bengal permitted them to set up commercial settlement in Pipli, Baleswar and Hooghly. The modus operandi adopted by the English traders in Bengal was disastrous not only

Portuguese pirates on a ship- Shyamrai Temple - Bishnupur Bankura.

for the local traders but also for the local cultivators and artisans. The import of synthetic and luxary items form their homeland against substantial exports of quality hand woven fabrics of artistic merit, extracted from the local artisans under unscruplous practices of trade aggravated imbalance causing distress to the local population. The officers of the company always used to lend to the weavers against their future production at a predetermined rate and got promissory notes signed by the weavers against them. In the event of any violation of the tenor under any circumstances whatsoever or selling goods to any other trader, the guards of the company used to chain them before making severe physical assault by whips or other rigorous methods. The social dignity, religion or identity of the weavers and their family members were damaged though nefarious means. The trade practices adopted by the English traders in Hooghly will be clear from the following excerpts made as a reference from 'An account of the trade of Hugly' in PNo. 554 of the Hugli Zelar Itihas 'O' Banga samaj by Sri Sudhir Kumar Mitra (Mar 1962 Edition Mondal Book House— Calcutta)

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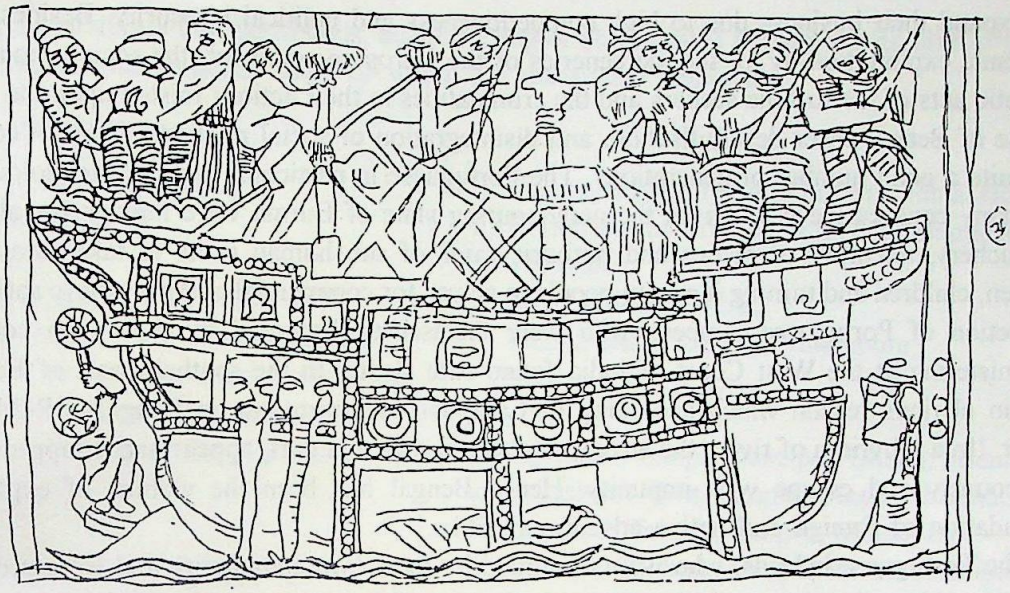

A large European ship carrying slaves and animals-Lalji Temple, Ambika Kalna.

'About Hughly there live many weavers who weave cotton cloth and tesser of Herba of several sorts and from the parts thereabout there is brought silk, sugar, opium, rice, wheat, oyle, butter, coarse hempe, gunneys and many other commodities. The way of procuring there is to agree upon Masters with the Merchants of HUGHLY, or to send Bannians who can give security, to buy there on our accounts in the places where they are made or procurable at cheapest hands, and whether we use one way or other we give passes in english names for bringing those goods free of customs, and all those places have so great a convenience that most of the goods are brought by water unless from the places near unto Hughly..... The goods we sell in HUGHLY by merchants there are upon time, or ready money, but which waysoever it is that we sell them we give passes and send them out in our names to avoid the merchants paying custome, which otherwise they would not do and we are forced to abate in the price proportionate."

The French did also set up a commercial settlement in Chundannagar near Chinsurah in 1674 AD. The first captain of the French company Deslande expanded the setlement and after obtaining permission from the then government, they constructed 'Fort de Orleans' on the bank of ganges. Incessant strifes between French and English forces on the control of trade and commerce caused transfer of ownership of Chandannagar to English on several occassions. However the French continued to retain Chandannagar uninterruptedly thereafter since 1816 AD.

Several other Europian nations also appeared in and around Bhadreswar and fought for supremacy in trade— they were Danes in Serampore, Belgians in Bhadreswar, Greeks in Rishra and Armenians in Konnagar. The Denmak government sold out Serampore to the English in the year 1845. The Belgian although retained their settlement in Bhadreswar/Banki Bajar and the Ostend Company of the Germany carried on commercial operations in Bhadreswar, they could

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not expand their business due to high competitiveness and political insecurity. Besides ruthless economic exploitation by all the merceneries of the Europian continent, the social impact of the despotic acts of the fortune seekers and the criminalities in their actions foisted upon the common people of Bengal sheer destabilisation, and disintegration of social relations— which continued, for quite a good number of generations. The Portuguese in particular and the Mongoloid 'Mugs for many consecutive years from the neighbouring state of Burma were famous for all acts of debauchery, relentless atrocitics and barbaric raids of sub human traits to take away wealth, women, children and turning innocent people to slaves for commercial and perversive satisfaction, A section of Portuguese lumpens who were themselves discarded by their own community administering at the West Coast of India found safe shelter in the southern part of Bengal for certain obvious reason which according to Campos (The portugese in Bengal— P-24) are as under. 'In a labyrinth of rivers the adventurers could dive and dart, appear and disappear, ravage the country and escape with impunity. Hence Bengal has been the victims of exploits and depradation of foreign and native adventurers alike.'

The Portuguese hybrids, who were discarded by their own community and were products of alliance with native women had been habituated in all round despotism. They were popularly known as 'Feringhi' and the native population used to maintain sheer contempt for these people. The Arakan and Portuguese lumpens being termed as 'Mugs' and 'Feringhis', were terrors in the eyes of the helpless common people. The wicked tyrants were mostly devoid of any civilized norms or code of ethics or conformity. The travel account of Van Linschoten who had been in India during 1583-1589 AD adequately testify the situation recorded in several literary references, of the relative period (P-95-Bengal past and present, Part I-1915 Haklyt. Edn).

Frances Bernier— a french doctor who visited India during 1655-1661 AD also described the contemporary state of affairs as under (Bernier F– Travels of Mogul empire Edited by A Constable, 1891 P. 175)

"Their ordinary trade was robbery and piracy. With some small and light gallies they did nothing but coast about the sea and entering into all rivers thereabout and into the channels and arms of ganges and between all these isles of the lower Bengal and often penetrating even so far as forty or fifty leagues up into the country, surpassed and carried away whole towns, assemblies, markets, feasts and weddings of the gentiles and others of that country making women slaves great and small with strange cruelty and burning all they could not carry away. And thence it is that at present there are seen in the mouth of the Ganges so many fire isles quite deserted, which were formerly well peopled, and where no other inhabitants are found but wild beasts and specially tigers."

The Naval fleet of the Portuguese was named as 'Armada'— which in local vocabulary was changed into 'Harmad' a corruption of Armada. In several folk tales, or literature, songs and ballads of Bengal the psychosis of the commom people around the Harmad have been vividly described which also at the same time found a prominant place in late mediaeval terracotta potrayal of the social condition of Bengal. The raids of the naval fleets, filibustering slave trading,

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the dumping of slaves into the vessels, auctioneering of slaves, wild torture and assault of slaves etc, are the common motifs, some of which are mentioned hereunder.

Special observation

a) Slave traders piling up slaves on Boat	i) Shyamsundarjiu Temple, Jhikhira, Amta. Howrah ii) Bhubaneswar Siva Temple, Mahishamuri, Howrah.
b) Slaves stored in a vessel and throwing off two slaves into the ocean to feed the sharks, while the punished desperately seeking survival	Janakiballav Temple, Tilanta para, Sabang, Midnapore
c) Naval vessels of the Harmad on sail	i) Raghunath Temple Dandipur, Ghatal, Midnapore ii) Lokeshwar Siva Temple, Mayna, Midnapore iii) Gopinath Temple, Daspur, Midnapore
d) Harmads in naval encounter	i) Vrajaraj Keshore Temple Purushottampur. Daspur, Midnapore. ii) Gopinath Temple, Radhakantapur, Daspur Midnapore iii) Gopinath Temple, Daspur, Midnapore iv) Sridharjiu Temple, Asnada, Udainarayanpur, Howrah v) Damodarjiu Temple, Khalna, Howrah. vi) Partapeswar Temple, Kalna, Bardhaman. vii) Ananta Vasudev Temple, Bansberia, Hooghly viii) Ramchandra Temple, Guptipara, Hooghly

19. Foreigners in the eyes of the common people.

The British at the initial stage of their rule enforced their will by armed might and did not mete out justice. At the later stage, they were constrained to offer to rural magnate, scopes for the exercise of limited govenment authority. Indeed the British were anxious to turn to their own advantage the authority, the zaminders had always exercised over their tenants and which it would have been impolitic, if not impossible wholly to have deprived them of. The result was a mixing of zamindari and British jurisdiction, of officially recognized and informal authority, in which responsibility often remained diffused and ambiguous.

The British government conducted scrutiny of the loyalty of the zaminders from time to time in enforcing the revenue adminstration on the relatively isolated villages— which possessed in practicality the sense of greater independence, as the administrative structure in the countryside was not that much extensive. Sometimes the estates were divided into Tehsils— and the deployment of intermediaries like Thikadars— who were retained on long term contracts, made their own arrangements with the tenantry with whom they shared a grain heap of harvest.

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By far the great portion of Tehsilder's time was however given over to the settlement of disputes. Some were handed over to the Peshkar, but the bulk brought to his office by the compliments were investigated and decided by the Tehsilder himself. These run the gamut from disputes over the building of houses and the location of boundaries to assaults, affrays and thefts and even such intimate family matters as divorces, dowries.

The Rajas or Zaminders mostly remained Talukdars and British subjects and the police or thanadar stood as a symbol of the intimate authority of the British Raj in the village, and the Taluqdar or Zamindar himself liable to the jurisdiction of the district court. The estates took on some of the functions of the government from time to time, though they came under the court of wards occassionally. The thrust of the British government management was towards bureaucratization. The British people sometimes found berth in the estate management of Rajas/ Zamindars with a high emoluments. There were indeed lucrative offers for the court of wards staff in as such as much employments, besides a good salary, provided satisfaction of the aptitude for estate management, shooting opportunites, elaborate out door lives, and a splendid house, More so, his family members were also employed in the same way as tutor of English of the young Zaminder/Raja and/or looking after stables, gardens and dispensary etc.

On the contrary the employees of the Zamindar estate had poor earnings and supplemented such meagre salaries by extortion and bribery. A recurrent theme of nineteenth century writings on rural society was also the unsatisfactory character of the court of wards management. Between the appointment of Managers unacquainted with Zamindari affairs, the corrupt behaviour of petty officials with no ties in the estate where they worked and the rigidities of a rule book that took no account of the traditional bonds between landlord and the tenant and in fact there was no perceptible difference between the conditions of the tenants under the landlord and those under the court of wards.

The Zamindar or Taluqdars continued to abuse their powers for personal advantage. There had been many cases where their own revenue jurisdiction extended to cases in which they were personally interested. The Zamindars were frequently used to cross the limts of formal or official methods with no particular purpose with regard to judicial powers granted by the government to be made applicable to every tenant of the estate. Neverthless the European officers maintained their superiority in all spheres of life and acted frequently in contravention of the desires of the Zamindars by employing people of humble origin without any acknowledged standing in the society, in various sensitive positions which sometimes caused humiliation of such Zamindars. The coterminous jurisdiction of the Zamindars was deliberately interfered by the English officials and the government as a matter of principle did not favour either the Zamindars or tenants, access to such English officials over the head of subordinate native officials. It was as such the general trend by such Zamindars to develop sychophancy and continue flattery of the European masters to keep them in good humours.

The inevitable accompaniment of the British rule was the disbandment of private militia and gradual establishment of internal loyal forces also comprising of European officials at the helm of affairs. The forces were armed with fire arms in order to combat coercion by the forces at Zamindars' disposal who were retained for the collection of rents. The Zamindars' forces with

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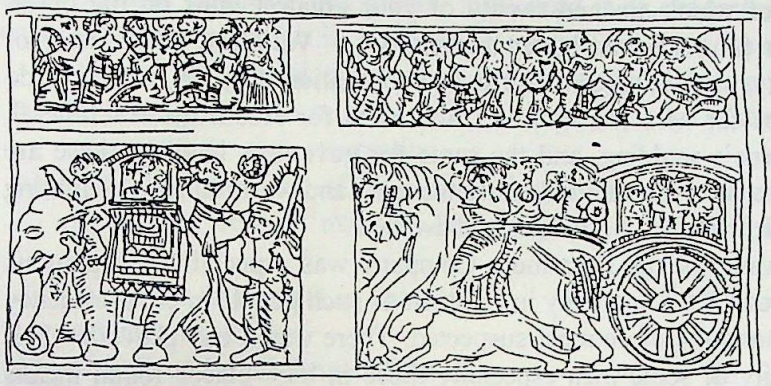
sticks cowed the individual peasants who were distressed and exposed to starvation, living with all sorts of humiliation in the downstream of the social stratification.



Leisurely trip by the Europeans and Native riches-Janakiballava Temple Tilandapara, Midnapore.

The village chowkidars customarily received their pay either by a small plot of rent free land or like many other craftsmen and village servants as a fixed percentage of the crop at harvest and they took their orders from the owner of the village who met the cost from his share. The British however did authorise the payment of chowkidari salaries in cash by the imposition of punitive cess on the landlords. The landlords also deployed persons with most notorious and bad characters in the rank of Dafadars and at times too encouraged or permitted their own lathials to indulge to acts of extortion or even physical violence against rivals or insubordinate underlinages.

Europeans in the official decorum - Siva Temple-Ilambajar Birbhum.

The servents of an East India Company in Bengal, after 1676 passed through a regular gradation of rank as apprentices, writers, factors, merchants and senior merchants. Originally no provision was made for family life. Even the chiefs were rarely accompanied by their wives and others were not expected to marry. This procedure directly contrasts with that of french company which definitely from the first proposed to establish colonies. The president was given disciplinary control over the young members and fines were imposed for breaches of rules or misconduct such as drunkenness, dicing, brawling or insubordination. From the first, considerable state was kept up. The governors of the settlements only moved abroad with flags, trumpets and the firing of salutes.

Europian soldiers with a woman - From AMC Collection.

With the development of the company's position in India from the status of factories to that of quasi colonies, there had been changes in the attitude of the convenant servants of the company which is reflected in the following excerpts from the India office records, letter book no 15, dispatch to St. Hellena, March 5, 1714.

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"We directed for every ship of ours that comes in or departs generally seven or nine guns, and (yet) when the fleet went away in July 1712, there is 385 pounds of weight of powder charged as extended, and 134 guns fired of which six and twenty of your greatest guns on the place. These we think too much, and for future expect better husbandry, ... We allow the number of guns fired on the days of solemnity, such as queen's birth day coronation day, etc, but can't do so for others, such as twenty guns for Mrs Mashborne's, the same for HoshKinson's funeral, one and twenty guns Mr Mashborne's wedding, and the same for governors landing, these are too many, a smaller number ought to serve. In addition to drunkenness and wastefullness, gambling was a besetting sin of the English in India, both men and women."

The private trading of the servants of the East India Company was especially conspicuous and detrimental to the greater interest of the company in as much as such people in the presidency of Bengal were always the richest and therefore most suspected. There was a bay proverb "Self and then company." The ingenunity of some men especially those in high places found means to keep within the letter of the law and yet defraud the company.

The East India company during the first half of the eighteenth century employed slave labour on a large scale. There was regular tariff for luckless humanity in that territory, parhaps the scene of greater continuous misery. Slaves were transported in worst condition which were even inferior to those of brutes, kept in inconducive habitation, provided murky diet and clothing, and after all, imposed severe punishments whenever situations even unwarranted. Consequent upon such acts, the company was constrained issue notification with servants not to treat such slaves as bad or worse than brutes.

In 1769-70 a terrible famine visited Bengal. It has been estimated that one third of the population that is about one crore souls, perished of starvation and disease, and one third of the culivated land became waste. The scene of misery that intervened, wrote one of the company servants in 1770, 'and still continues, shocks humanity too much to bear description. Certain it is in several parts the living have fed on the dead'. Many of the company's servants were accused with too much reason of making large profits by buying up rice and retailing it at high prices. The revenue as Warren Hastings admitted was collected with cruel severity; less than five percent of the land was remitted at the time of greatest distress, and ten percent was actually added to it in the following year. The terrible calaminty. whose ravages, two generations failed to repair had far reaching social and economic effects. Many of the farmers of the revenue and the old aristocratic families were ruined. Bengal scarcely began to recover its formal prosperity till after permanent settlement of 1793. While the company's servants made large private fortunes, the profits of the company itself from this time steadily decreased till its credit became so impaired that the state was forced to step and regulate its affairs.

Incessant strifes, stout conflicts, troop movements with guns and ammunition of the British army were common phenomenons experienced by the common people during the days of agression, occupation and settlement of the British rule in India. They did also have intimate knowledge of the domestic life of the foreigners, who had their public lives on the soil for enforcing the colonization of the country. Political, military and economic superiority of the conquerors, in the eyes of the terracotta artists of the Late mediaeval Bengal temples, were receptive,

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nevertheless they observed the day to day lives of European men and women meticulously as the same were different traits of culture altogether, compared to those of their own. The above socio political episodes also greatly influenced their perception and the reflection of their own cognized ideas or notion in potrayal of images has been found evident.

A few of the special observation are mentioned hereunder

a)	European civilians in daily Life engagements and recreation	Hattala Temple– Ilambajar, Birbuhm
b)	Satirical depictions of the natives flattering Europeans even in manners becoming of pets–	Laxmi Janardan Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum.
c)	European aristocrats in habitual affluent life styles	Chandranath Siva Temple, Hetampur, Birbhum
d)	Potrait of Royal British Women	do
c)	Potrait of an English poet	do
d)	Europians smoking tobacco with smoking gadgets	Radhagobinda & Radharaman Temple Gobindanagar (Daspur) Midnapore
e)	European soldiers and guards in uniform	Kali Temple, Itanda (Bolpur) Birbhum
f)	European women in their traditional costumes	i) Siva Deul at Surul, Birbhum ii) Gopinath Temple, Dasghara, Hooghly
g)	European couple in amorous Posture	i) Damodar Temple Hadal Narayanpur, Bankura ii) Lakshmi Janardan Temple Debipur, Memari, Bardhaman
h)	European Dwarpals	i) Simhavahini Temple Paikpari Debra, Midnapore ii) Simhavahini Temple, Krishnapur, Ghatal, Midnapore.
i)	A platoon of European Solidiers standing in fornt of Commandant.	i) Tulshimancha, Gambhirnagar Ghatal, Midnapore ii) Jhareswar Siva Temple Kanasole (Keshpur) Midnapore
j)	Marching artillery beating drums	i) Sridharnathjiu Temple- Asanda, Howrah ii) –Sitanath Temple Kararpara, Jhikhira, Howrah iii) Shyamsundar Jiu Temple Madhyapara, Jhikhira Howrah. iv) Sitaram Temple, Ghoshpara, Jhikhira, Howrah.

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k) Comandant smoking cigars and regiments of armed solidiers	Dalan Temple of Chowdhury family Gayenpara, Khirpai, Midnapore
l) Foreign soldiers with guns and indigenous soldiers with sword and shield	Sive Temple, Yakubpur Ghatal, Midnapore
m) Hunting by Englishmen armed with guns	i) Radhagobinda and Radharaman Temple, Gobindapur Daspur, Midnapore ii) Dadhimamadab Temple Amaragari, Amta, Howrah
n) Large figure of European soldiers armed with guns	Damodarjiu Temple, Marghurali, Jagatballavpur, Howrah.
o) Horserider European hunter with Javelin in hand	Sitaramjui Temple, Rautara Amta, Howrah

20. Religious Life

The worship of and veneration for, the multiplicity of deities as per all religious sects and popular beliefs in Bengal may be traced to a very early period and have persisted throughout the ages. Along with these many popular beliefs such as sanctity of certain localities, efficacy of pilgrimage, recitation of sacred texts, and many religious and semi religious vows, fairs and festivals, have formed a substantial part of the total content of religion in the minds of the masses.

Elaborate rituals for the worship of various deities and religious feasts and festivals were fully developed all marked by a spirit of sportive enjoyment. This coupled with a less exacting demand on spiritual fervour and high tone of morality in the sects, seems to be the secret of its great hold on masses whose ordinary inclinations find in it a comfortable religious sanction. One of the distinguishing characterstics of the much pronounced Bhakti cult is the exalted position of the 'Guru' or the spiritual guide. God can be worshipped in the house or temple of the 'Guru' to whom the devotees are enjoined to surrender all their belongings. It is believed that the highest spiritual object is to join the eternal sport of the gods. The world life offers no bar to this salvation. True to this doctrine, the 'Gurus' were also sometimes married men and led worldly lives. In its degraded form, the Vaishnava sect countenanced antinomian practices and made Vaishnavism a byword of reproach. This prevailing trend in Vaishnavism was in fact had some baneful effects and Chaitanyadev saved the Bengal Vaishnavism from the degradation. The merit of Chaitanya lies in the fact that he elevated passions of Radha Krishna to a high spiritual plane and stressed the emotional at the cost of ceremonial side of the religion. His piety, devotion and fervour introduced a pure and spiritual element in Vaishnavism. But with the lapse of time Radha gained more and more prominence and many degrading elements represented by the 'Sakhbhavas' the ideal of the male members of which is to obtain the woman hood of Radha even in physical sense.

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There is an important lesson in the process that any exaggerated importance attached to the female element in religion or the association of religion with amorous elements, even though inspired or prompted by the highest spiritual motive and backed by metaphysical or mystic interpretation, is sure to lead to degradation of its followers. The best is illustrated by the fate of Sakta and Radha-Krishna cult.

The concept of tutelary deities of the village is one of the most ancient institution of man and is a common feature of all the areas of Bengal. It is also a very prominent trait of rural Hindu life. In many villages of the Bengal there is a village goddess who is often identified with one of the forms of mother goddess. Her altar is generally under a big tree where one meets with heaps of terracotta figurines of horses and elephants, which have been offered to the deity in fulfilment of vows often taken for recovery from diseases. She is worshipped both periodically and occassionally by individuals as also by the entire village on occassions of birth, marriage and first rice eating, etc, the individuals concerned are sure to be taken to her place for her blessings.

Apart from the socio religious culture developed through collective spiritual life of the people belonging to different sects, beliefs with inherent contradictions and spirits of co existence, the development of coenobitism in Bengal appears to be significant. As a course of spiritual attainment, one form called Sanayasa (Asceticism) embracing homelessness through leaving ones home as well as kith and kin. The 'Sanyasa' as a tradition emerged as an institution, which not only existed but flourished in Bengal. Seekers of spiritual attainment would pass from home to homelessness were sometimes known as Parivrajaka (wanderes—Paribbajakas in Pali), Sanyasins (one who has cast of home and worldly life), Sramana (a toiler for spiritual life), Bhiksu (a mendicant living on alms) No credal or other distinction in the community were originally implied by the institution.

Man playing Kansara- Lalji Temple, Kalna- Bardhaman.

In the later development of the religion, where differences in creeds and systems became more clearly defined, the wanderers of each religions had their own body of practices, rules and regulations, disciplinary and organisational. The name Bhiksu and Sramana was borne by the Buddhists, 'Yati'— by the Jains and Sanyasin by the followers of Brahmanism. Nevertheless the institution of 'Sanyasa' enjoyed great popular esteem in Bengal and their way of life spent in sacrifice, tolerance and devotion, was also potrayed in temple decoration of late mediaeval Bengal.

Yet another community of priests popularly known as Mohantas became popular subjects in art during the contemporary period in Bengal. Any 'Math' or temple organisation belonging to Vaishnava sect had a spiritual leader cum priest, who along with his disciples used to stay at the Temple complex or compound for rendering regular service to worshipped deity and to cultivate

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the spiritual education among the common masses. Mohanta heading the temple organisation, was expected to have several disciples— some of whom were allowed to wander on religious missions. The designation of Mohanta, is generally hereditary, but the position required profound religious or mythological scholasticity. The owners or builders of the temples, who were ordinarily landlords or very rich people, used to fund the temple administration and to extend material as well as administrative assistance to the Mohantas who were considered as the spiritual and administrative head of the temple.

Apart from the routine rituals, hymns and practices, as well codification and adherence at the norms, the Mohantas were required to generate necessary funds from the cultivable lands under the jurisdiction of the temple and contributed or donated by the landlords for service of the deity. Moreover they also used to receive alms from the disciples staying at different places through extensive tours from time to time. Mohantas were in general a respected community and their way of life did not escape the attention of the terracotta artists of late mediaeval Bengal, some instances of which are mentioned hereinafter.

The 'Charak' festival and other scenes- Gopinath Ekratna Temple- RadhaKantapur, Daspur, Midnapore

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The different forms of worship, as prescribed by beliefs or norms of the different religious sects, recitation of sacred texts, many religious or semi religious vows, etc prevailing in the Late mediaeval Bengal appeared in picturesque forms in temple decorations some of which are also cited hereunder.

a) Festival of 'Charaka'	a) Gopinath Temple– Radhakantapur, Daspur Midnapore b) Radhagobindajiu Temple Antpur, Hooghly c) Damodarjiu Temple—Hadalnarainpur, Patrasayer, Bankura.
b) Animal sacrifice before Goddess	Kali Temple, Tarapith, Birbhum
c) King being baptised by a saint	Ananta Vasudeb Temple, Bansberia, Hooghly.
d) Woman in service of a Saints feet	Jhareswar Siva Temple, Kanasole, Keshpur, Hooghly
e) Linga worship by a woman	i) Radhadamadav & Sitala Temple Khirpai, Midnapore ii) Rameshwar Temple, Rajnagar, (Panskura) Midnapore
f) Bearded saint with turban standing in meditation	Umapati Siva Temple Gangadaspur, Khirpai Midnapore
g) A female saint	Sinhavahini Temple, Paikpari, Debra, Midnapore
h) The Baul ascetics	Rameshwar Temple, Rajnagar, Panskura, Midnapore
i) Brahmana priest preparing holy strings of Yagya	Ramchandra Temple, Jalchak, Pingla Midnapore
j) Festive Procession	Bhubaneswari Devi Temple, Mahishamuri, Amta Howrah.
k) Woman offering worship to goddess	Damodarjiu Temple, Marghurali, Jagatballavpur, Howrah.
l) Ritual practice of counting chain balls of saints	i) Radhavinod Temple, Purba Gopalpur, Paskura, Midnapore ii) Sadananda Siva Temple, Pingla, Midnapore
h) Devotees Paying homage to ten armed Mahamaya	Radha Damodar Rashmancha– Mangloi Shyamballavpur (Panskura) Midnapore
n) A saint preparing toxic elements	i) Radhavinod Temple– Purbagopalpur Panskura, Midnapore ii) Ramchandra Temple Jalchak, Pingla Midnapore
o) Devotees paying worship to Siva	Shyamrai Temple Bishnupur, Bankura
p) Saint reciting mythological verses before a king	Radhavinod Temple Purbagopalpur, Panskura, Midnapore Madan mohan Temple Bishnupur, Bankura

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q) Ascetics in various postures– standing or seated	i) Shyamrai Temple Bishnupur, Bankura ii) Radhadamodarjiu Temple, Hadalnarayanpur Patrasayer Bankura iii) Radhagobinda Temple Antpur Hooghly iv) Gopinath Temple Dasghara, Hooghly
r) Performing 'Yagya' by saints	Siva Temple, Thupsara, Nanur, Birbhum
s) Ascetics preparing for Yagya in the presence of a saint	Laxmi Janardan Temple Surul, Bolpur, Birbhum
t) Detailed life styles of Mohanta Community	i) Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura ii) Maharudreshwar Temple, Kharor, Khejuri, Midnapore iii) Gopal & Simhavahini Temple, Nabagram, Ghatal Midnapore iv) Gopal Temple, Mirjapur, Patashpur, Midnapore v) Garaichandi Temple, Ichhalnagari, Howrah vi) Damodarjiu Temple, Khalna, Amta, Howrah vii) Damodarjiu Temple, Marghurali, Jagatballvpur, Howrah. viii) Madangopaljiu Temple, Melak, Bagnan, Howrah
v) Mohanta playing conchshell on the templedoor	Dharmaraj Temple, Jadupur, Jagatballavpur Midnapore

21. The Mode of Communication

1) The marine culture in Bengal

In mediaeval Bengal the principal mode of transport across the lands was animal driven carts or back of animals like elephants horses or camels. The maritime routes or river transports were also extremely popular in view of the natural infrastructure of innumerable rivers and channels passing through the lands providing conducive atmosphere of river transport to distant places and even to overseas locations. The network of channels leading to the bay of Bengal irrigated an immense basin. So great is the volume of water carried down by the mighty Ganges and the Brahmaputra from the north east that their combined detla interlaced with innumerable channels, covers a space of 20000 square miles in the subcontinent. Navigation has been a natural recourse, as we find in the mediaeval mythological texts, scriptures and other historical sources, Though the silt laden channel of the river Ganga is only kept open with difficulty for overseas navigation—which is deemed difficult or dangerous, the delta of Ganges has been till modern times the gate of eastern India from the sea.

Ancient India had its own navigation technology, which is evident in several literary depictions with regard to charactrstic features like the volume and size of the vessels, norms of utilisation, purposewise variations and different techniques of construction, beliefs on auspicious or inauspicious vessels with their purported effects on the owners, (Ref. page 158-167 of Prachin Silpa Parichaya, etc, by Girish Chandra Vedantatirtha, Calcutta BS 1379) Though it is now difficult

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Kamale Kamini- Siva Temple at Mayrapara, Dubrajpur.

to identify each of such categories as mentioned hereunder, it is imperative to mention the same to show the intensity of maritime culture once existed on the soils of India and so in Bengal.

(a) Boats have been broadly classified into two types, One used for river or canal navigation is generally called 'Nauka', the other used for sea or ocean navigation is termed as 'Mahanauka' or 'Pot' The boats are further identified as 'Ordinary' (Samanya) 'Special' (Visesh)

(b) From the point of view of the size of the vessel ie. length, width and height, there is yet another classification of ordinary (Samanya) type, such as Khudra, Madhyama, Bhima, Chapala, Patala, Bhaya, Dirgha, Patraputa, Garbhara, Manthara. Out of such ten types, the vessels belonging to Bhima. Bhaya and Garbhara type are inauspicious.

(c) The Size of the boat based upon the given measurement norms for special (Vishesh) category, known as Dirghika or Unnata, are further typified as Dirghika, Tarani, Lola, Gattara, Gamini, Tari, Janghala, Plabini, Dharini and Begini. Out of the same the types of Lola, Garvini and Plabini are considered inauspicious.

(d) The frontal elevation of the Boats identified to belonging to kings born in planetary domination of Sun are in the shape of heads of tigers, buffaloes, serpents, birds, frogs and human beings. Kings born in such similar other planetary domination will have frontal elevation of boats shaped like the heads of swan, peacock, lion, elephant, serpents, tigers, and insects etc.

(e) Boats generally used for comfortable movements having configuration of a house with roof top or shed were called 'Swagriha' Nauka. The classification depending upon the location of house structure, were Sarva Mandira, Madhyamandira and Agramandira. When the house occupies the major portion of the boat surface, it is called Sarvamindara, when occupies the central position of the surface it is called Madhya Mandira, when occupies the frontal position of the surface it is called Agra Mandira. The Sarvamandira boats were used for movement of kings, wealth, royal women and horses. The Madhya Mandira boats were used for luxurious tours of the kings or landlords and were meant for use in the monsoon season. The Agramandira boats are meant for battles and were generally used during post monsoon periods.

A passengar boat on Sail-Raghabeswar Temple- Dignagar Nadia.

(f) We find further mention of a type of boat called 'Naubiman' which is perhaps called to signify

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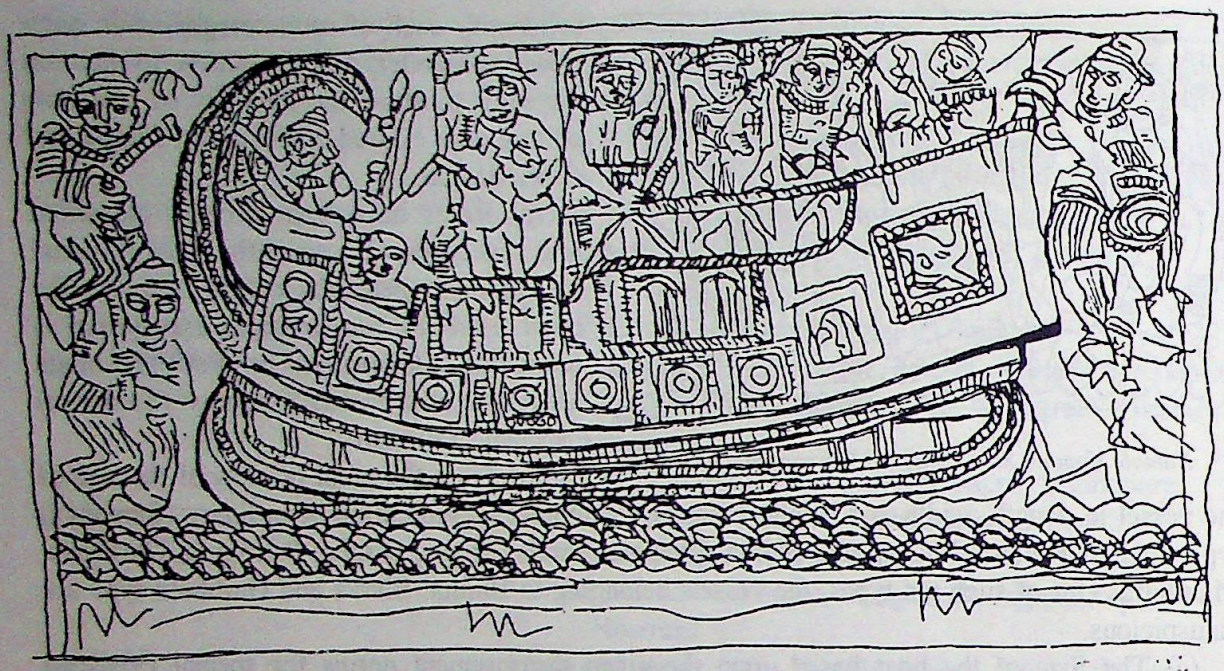

The European merchant Vessel-Siva Temple at Mankar Bardhaman

boats with excellent movement capability comparable with air crafts. Legends also support existence of vessels with multistoried structures on the surface.

Mediaeval Bengal also had different local variation of boats used for commercial and routine voyage utilities, besides the designated use for naval battles. Emperor Akbar used to acquire ships manufactured in Bengal for his naval divisions contemplating sea voyage and also deployed vessels manufactured in Bengal for fighting out 'Mag' and 'Feringhi' pirates. The superior technology and skill for manufacturing was available mostly in the Eastern Bengal.

It is further available on record that the massive war boats manufactured in Bengal had even as many as 64 oars and installed with canons, which were generally supported by a batch of small, but speedy boats which were called 'Kosa'. The translated version of persian text 'Baharistan' by Jadunath Sarkar clearly indicates that Pratapaditya had a fleet of vessels which were known as 'Bapari', 'Kosa', 'Balia', Pal, 'Ghurab' (grab), 'Pasta' (Fusta), 'Jalia' (Gallivat) which were all indigenously manufactured.

Out of the said varieties the most stable and powerful was Ghurab (grab), which literally means 'crow'. It generally had two masts, which are increased to three in case of large vessels. It carried two cannons on the front and some other cannons also were kept installed elsewhere within the vessel. The 'Balia' boats were comparatively small but had greater lengths having 'Agra Mandira' characters stated hereinbefore. The 'Palwar'type was so called because of the sail set therin, which was generally imported from Dacca. It was more a load bearing vessel. The 'Machwa' (Massoola boat) variety was manufactured in a different way having assembled the wooden slices being tied up firmly so as to withstand tidal waves of the sea. It was meant generally for use at Madras coast. Pasta (Fusta) is a high speed vessel having two masts thereupon. Jalia

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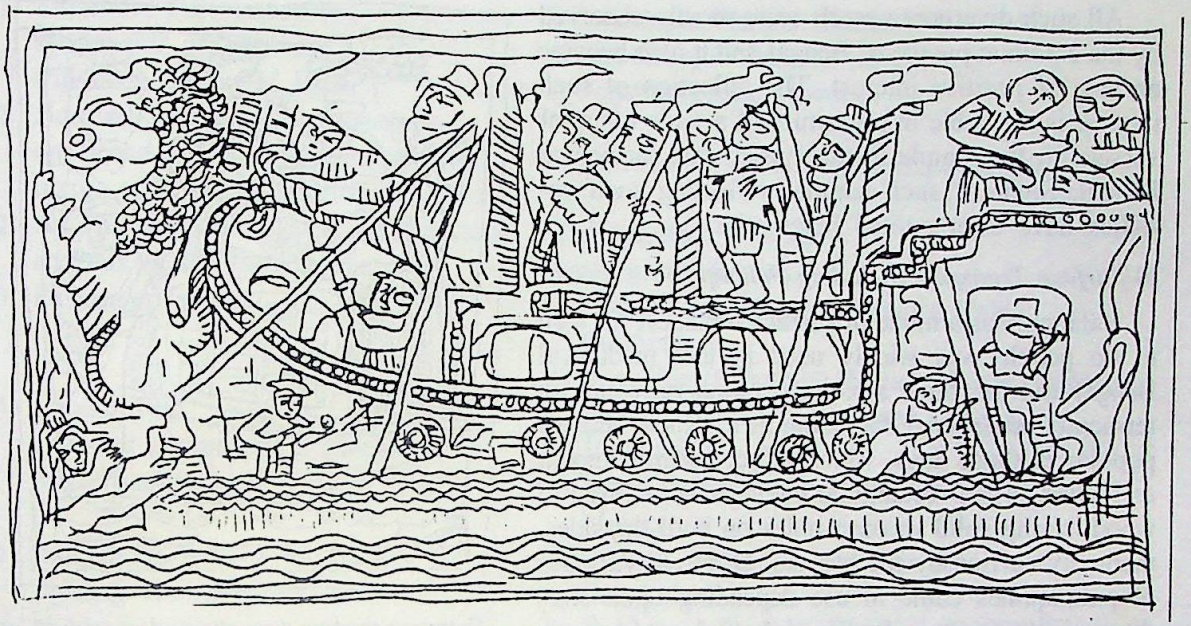

A large marine vessel of the Europeans- Ananda Bhairavi Temple, Sukharia-Hooghly.

(Gallivat) boat was also used at south Indian coasts. It was sailed with the help of several oars, which in certain cases numbered upto fifty. On large sized Jalia vessels, there could be accommodation for six to seven conons at a time. The 'Piyara' boats were very comfortable passenger carriers and the passengers could have enjoyable sails. Yet another variety named 'Mahulgiri' were larger and more comfortable carriers— boarded generally by aristocrat or royal females. In the cluster of vessels meant for journeys other than civilian journeys, seperate vessels were marked individually for the commander or for the emperor himself. The 'Bepari' variety was primarily a commercial vessel used for cargo movements including those of food and ammunitions. Such variety used to have small shed overhead and several oars in the front side, besides a large mast installed at the central place.

From the other historical sources we can find certain indigenous varieties of boats identified to be pertaining to the place of their origin, some of which are mentioned hereunder.

a) The Distirct of Jessore– Dingi, Pansi, Bachhari, Balam

b) The District of Faridpur— Pansi, Saidpuri, Bachhari

c) The District of Dacca— Faridpur — Sip used for quick transmission of message.

d) The District of Dacca— Patua, Bhar, Jang (Cargo Carriers)

The varieties which used to come form North Western territories of India was Patil. The Mughal vessels, which had been reported to have invaded Bengal were of 'Ghurab', 'Patil', 'Jalba' and 'Kosa' varieties mostly. The 'Mag' pirates frequently raided Bengal with 'Ghurab' 'Jalba', 'Jong', Kosa and 'Balam' varieties of Boats.

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All such divergent vessels were mostly observed by the common people of Bengal and it also became an area of positive interest. The reflection of such interest is available in potraiture of a wide range of vessels on the temple terracottas of late mediaeval Bengal. Some of such temples reflecting such varieties have been quoted hereinafter.

European smoking through a gadget on the boat top- Siva Temple at chandanpur, Bolpur, Birbhum.

ii) Surface Transport including Palanquin

Palanquin as a mode of surface transport for well to do people was widely used in late mediaeval Bengal and the same also have found reflection in terracotta depictions. Palanquin as a vehicle became popular in those days, which infact became known as Palkee. It is a rectangular cabin manufactured of wood having solid wooden poles on both the sides, manually carried by the bearers. Different varieties of palanquines came in use depending upon size, dimensions, number of poles and number of bearers carrying the cabin. The categories at the outset are as under

a) Chaturdol, Astadol, Dwadasdol, Sorashdol, Bingshatidol and upto a maximun of Chaturbingsati dol— representing number of bearers carrying the cabin. such as four, eight, twelve, sixteen, twenty and twenty four respectively.
b) .The Palanquins were further classified into four catcgories namely Jai, Kalyan, Veer, Simha representing the caste of the landlord or king to be carried through the same. It also indicates the size of the cabin.
c) Yet another classification of the same is evident, which is called Sachhadi (with roof), Nishchhadi (without roof), depending upon the purpose and season for such utilisation. The palanquins were very often painted and profusely ornamented with metal or wooden designs, and quality textiles.

We also find frequent picturisation of palanquins on the terracotta plaques of the late mediaeval Bengal temples.

Special observations on the mode of transport.

a) Naval fleets on way to battle— Lokeshwar Siva Temple—Mayna, Midnapore
b) Harmad vessels on voyage of raids—
   i) Gopinath Temple, Daspur, Midnapore
   ii) Vraja Krishore Temple Purushottampur, (Daspur) Midnapore
c) Sea Voyage on trade mission (Possibly Dhanapati, Sripati— Chandimangala)
   i) Laxmi Janardan Temple, Ajuria, Panskura Midnapore
   ii) Bhubaneswar Siva Temple Uttar Gobindanagar, Daspur, Midnapore
   iii) Gopinath Temple, Radhakantapur, Daspur Midnapore

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d) Zaminder Surrounded by sycophants on pleasure trip on a decorated Boat	i) Sitaramjiu Temple, Rautara, Howrah ii) Damodarjiu Temple, Marghurali Jagatballavpur, Howrah.
e) Harmad vessel with gunmen on Board beside a therianthropic image of Man-fish playing guiter	Shyam Rai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura.
f) An European Ship carrying men and animals in the same space	Dadhimadhab Temple Amaragari, Howrah.
g) Passenger boats	i) Pratapeswar Temple, Ambika Kalna, Burdwan. ii) Siva (Deul) Temple, Jalandi, Nanur, Birbhum.
h) Landlord in smoking posture on a comfortable, boat journey	i) Kantaji Temple Kantanagar Dinajpore, Bangladesh ii) Janaki ballav Temple Tilantapara, Sabang Midnapore
i) Indigenous fighting vessels on sail to chase raiders	i) Gobinda Temple, Putia, Rajshahi, Bangladesh ii) Ratneswar Temple, Bhattamati, Nabagram Mushidabad iii) Jorabangla Temple Lohagara, Jessore, Bangladesh
j) Harmad Naval fleets transporting goods and slaves in the same space	i) Sitanath Temple, Kararpara, Jhikhira, Howrah. ii) Ananta Vasudeb Temple Bansberia, Hooghly iii) Raghunath Temple, Dandipur, Ghatal, Midnapore iv) Brajakrishore Temple Baliharpur, Daspur Midnapore
k) Landlord travelling in a palanquin escorted by official servants and hunter dogs	Radhagobinda & Radharaman Temple Gobindapur, Daspur, Midnapore
l) Landlord with smoking gadgets in a pleasure trip on palanquin	i) Kantaji Temple, Kantanagar, Dinajpore ii) Gopinath, Temple, Daspur, Midnapore
m) Landlord attempting hunting from the shelter of Palanquin	Raghunath Temple, Dandipur, Ghatal, Midnapore
n) Landlord on journey with a convoy of elephant riders, horse riders and charriot escorted by servant, officials	Kantaji Temple Kantanagar Dinajpore
o) Palanquin of Landlord piloted by horserider soldiers followed by cart and elephant riders	i) Ramchandra Temple, Guptipara, Hooghly ii) Kali Temple, Barnagar Ajimgunj, Murshidabad

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p) Landlord and European officials on hunting journey riding on elephant followed by horse driven carts with hunter dogs	Janakiballav Temple, Tilantapara, Sabang Midnapore
q) Landlord accompanied by a public women in fancy carried on a horse driven cart	Pratapeswar Temple Kalna Bardhaman.
r) Rail and Steam Engine being fuelled by drivers.	Raghunath Vishnu Temple, Anandapur, Godapiyasal Midnapore

22. Entertainments in social life

In the background of the nature and qualities of entertainment, the social life of Bengal during mediaeval times, can be understood. The Hindus' engagement in various entertainment activities is primarily in the spheres of music, dance, and drama which were commonly associated with the contemporary religion. These were indulged to before the gods at various social ceremonies and other auspicious occassions. The art of music, dance and songs had not only been guided by specific norms and principles, but also became popular institutions of Bengal— which afforded a specific basis for proper culture of those faculties. In such faculties of culture, there had been efforts to formulate an universal basis and to cultivate the aesthetic side of the human nature.

It was convention that in India or so in Bengal the masses were reached through various festivities and entertainments prescribed in the established tradition and generally characterised by religious fervour. The concentrated wisdom of ages could easily permeate through various starta of the society, from the highest to the lowest. Through such mediums of popular festivities and entertainments, the social teachings of the puranas, the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata have found their way even to the illiterate persons.

The institution of music is generally consecrated to the gods. The ragas and raginis through which vocal and instrumantal music finds its wealth of expression are presided over by different divinities. The common masses who were generally habitating outside the periphery of the institution, however had their immense resources of songs, inherited from an unknown past, as adjuncts to their physical and spiritual existence in the world embeded in their tribal cults, customs, beliefs and practices. This was in the form of folk acculturation of epic mythologies and divergent concepts of destiny as well as absolute translated into their own concepts and languages. Dance too had a religious foundation and was performed in the temples in celebration of certain festivals sacred to particular gods or goddeses and also in connection with observance of vratas by women. As for example, in Bengal Siva is still worshipped by the votaries in the month of Chaitra and dance forms the integral part of the worship. The practices of singing and dancing in Bengal also were into vogue among women at the time of marriage and other socio religious ceremonies, which took various shapes and forms with the development of concepts.

In sporadic cases, there had also been tribal dance festivals. The common festivals which involved peformance of such dance (music) were Snana Yatra (ablution festival), Hindola Yatra (Swing festival), Rasa Yatra (festival of circular dance), Ratha Yatra (car festival) and Dola Yatra

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(Holi amusement), in which large number of people took part and the festivities were performed in primitive simplicity. Various musical instruments were used for such music like drum, flute, lyre, violin, Khola or Mridanga, cymbals etc.

Bengal in mediaeval time became an extremely important centre of emergence and development Kirtana songs, which were creative specimens of the loftiest feelings of devotion and piety in singing the glory of Lord Krishna and expressing repentance for sins both inherited and acquired. This is pre eminently due to the teaching of Chaitanya, who alongwith his spiritual brother Nityananda is considered to be the father of modern Samkirtana. The invasion of the new congregational and revivalist mode of worship did away with the distinctions of caste. The Brahmana and the cobbler, the rich and the poor met on a common platform, so far the celebration of gods name was concerned. Kirtana in Bengal since mediaeval times reached the acme of emotional expressions thrrough music. By intorducing Kirtana as adaptable to mass singing and making its musical accompaniments simple and available to all, the Vaishnavas opened floodgates of different faculties of popular musical entertaniments and creative lyrics and composition.

In Dancing posture-Mahadava Temple-Naldanga-Jessore.

Dancing figure-JoraBangla Temple- Bishnupur Bankura.

Sri Nivas Acharya who converted the independent King Vira Hambira of Vishnupur (Bankura), paved the way for spread of Vaishnavaism over the whole of south West Bengal. The spread of Kirtana and Padavalis being sung in the public, concerned the theme of either divine love of Radha Krishna or events in the life of Chaitanya.

The cult of Mangala deities also at the relevant time included the adoption of vows (vrata) by women, periodic or seasonal gatherings in public places of worship (Chandimandapa) or halls of religious dance (Natamandira) attached to a temple to celebrate the exploits of deities and offer to them special worship on important occassions like marriage, wearing or sacred thread etc. The celebration took the form of musical performance, the main singer (gayan) with his fly whisk (chamara) and tinkling ankects (Nupura) taking the help of repeaters (Dohar) and instruments. The dates fixed for the worship generally have reference to the deity worshipped, the general plan of such celebration is that a small period, say of eight days, is devoted to an intense and continued remembrance of deity in two sittings, one by day and another by night through recital of different themes (pala) extolling his power

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Dancers with playing instruments-AMC Collection, Kolkata.

and beneficience. One of these days, generally towards the end of the celebration, practically the whole night is spent in religious singing.

The actions of music, dances and entertainments of ritual connections were largely depicted, besides the actions of Kirtana singers, in the terracotta ornamentation of late mediaeval Bengal temples. One significant development at the later stage is clearly evident in installing large sized solid figurines of men/women with musical instruments in hand besides the entrace/exit doors of Rashmanchas particularly in the districts of Midnapore and Howrah. Some of the special observations with regard to entertainments in social life are cited hereunder.

Incidentally it is worthwhile mentioning that certain actions purported to be evidences of social entertainments relating to sports activities have also been displayed in the terracotta decorations of late mediaeval Bengal temples. The sports activities displayed are mainly acrobatic shows of the tribal people and wrestling of flabby peoples being viewed by people for entertainment, etc.

1) Women playing Violin, Vina, Drum Bells, flutes etc. (large independent solid figures)	i) Laxmi Janardan Rashmancha, Purbapara, Ajuria (Panskura) Midnapore ii) Rashmancha, Kumarpur, Jagatballavpur, Howrah
2) Man playing animal horn flute	Gazalaxmi Temple, Bhandargacha, Howrah.
3) Public women singers	i) Raghunath Temple, Dandipur, Ghatal, Midnapore ii) Raghunath Vishnu Temple– Anandapur Midnapore iii) Shyamathakurani Temple– Malancha, Kharagpur, Midnapore
4) Women fluting a coachshell	Simhavahini Temple, Paikpari, Debra, Midnapore
5) Women peforming music	Siva Temple Daskalgram, Nanur, Birbhum.
6) Women playing Vina	Gopinath Temple, Dasghara, Hooghly
7) Siva Playing Vina	i) Siva Temple (Paschimpara), Surul, Bribhum ii) Gopinath Temple, Dasghara, Hooghly

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8) Dancing action, for ritual celebration in various styles	i) Siva Temple– Nijabalia Jagatballavpur Howrah ii) Pratapeswar Temple, Kalna, Bardhaman iii) Ananta Vashudev, Temple, Bansberia, Hooghly iv) Ramchandra Temple, Guptipara, Hooghly v) Gazalaxmi Temple, Bhandargachha, Howrah vi) Janakiballav Temple, Tilantapara, Sabang, Midnapore vii) Ratneshwar Temple, Bhattamati, Nabagram Murshidabad
9) Dancers holding fans in hand or otherwise with dancing costumes of different designs and drummers supporting such dances	i) Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura ii) Madan Mohan Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura iii) Jor Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura.
10) Man beating drum and playing a long wind instrumental flute	Gopinath Temple, Dasghara, Hooghly
11) Gandharva playing vina	Jor Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura
12) Assembly of Drummers and musicians as auspicious symbols for festive celebration	a) Brinadaban Biharijui, Temple, Eroti Daspur Midnapore b) Radhamadhab Temple, Gopalpur, Patashpur Midnapore c) Rashmancha Annexe— Sridharjiu Temple— Gaura, Daspur, Midnapore d) Laxmi Janardan Jiu Temple— Teparpara, Patashpur, Midnapore e) Shyamsundar Rashmancha— Saulan, Daspur, Midnapore f) Sridharjiu Rashmancha— Harekrishnapur, Paskura, Midnapore g) Brindabanchandra Rashmancha— Ramkrishnapur, Daspur, Midnapore h) Sridharjiu Rashmancha— Palaspai, Daspur, Midnapore i) Damodarjiu Rashmancha— Bhairavpur, (Chandrakona) Midnapore

Other forms of entertainment

1) Wrestling actions	a) Shyam Rai Temple Bishnupur, Bankura b) Sridharjiu, Temple Asanda, Howrah c) Damodarjiu Temple Khalna, Amta, Howrah
2) Acrobatic Shows of tribals	Madangopaljiu Temple, Malak, Howrah
3) Bull fighting	Jor Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura.

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4) Flying pigeons for pleasure — Shyam Rai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura.
5) Dancing beer for entertainment — Radhagovinda & Radharaman temple, Gobindanagar, Keshpur, Midnapore.

The picturisation of chorus singers of kirtana has atready been mentioned herein before under The chaitanya episode of this chapter

Dancers in concert- ShyamRai Temple- Bishnupur Bankura.

23. Use of intoxicants

Intoxicants like wine, opium and Bhang were frequently indulged. In spite of injunctions of the Quran, which strictly forbade the use of wine, drinking was quite popular among Mohamedans, particularly the upper classes and soldiers, who were very fond of it.

It is the nobility, however which indulged in intoxication indiscriminately. Tobacco gained rapid popularity soon after its introduction in India in 1605 by the Portuguese. Jahangir enacted prohibition which remained confined to small pockets only. The general population during mediaeval times, though remained non-smokers, the habits of smoking and intoxication became a symbol of aristocracy. With different exclusive and artistic smoking gadgets, the affluent class or the landlords started considering such habits a matter of dignity and status, particularly after the British occupation. The Europeans were in general habitual smokers considering such habits as a part of their culture, which the indigenous nobility imitated and turned into a symbol of loyalty to the Raj as well as status to the common masses.

There has been several depictions of the smoking actions and behaviour characteristic of intoxication, on the terracotta plaques of a large member of late mediaeval Bengal temples, some of which are cited hereunder.

a) Smoking tobacco through different designs of ornamented smoking apparatus — Shyam Rai Temple Vishnupur, Bankura.
b) Gentries smoking tobacco, in 'Hukka' — Vishnu Temple, Gosaibajar Chandakona, Midnapore

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c) 'Bhang' being processed by saints

i) Radhamadav Temple– Purbagopalpur, Panskura, Midnapore
ii) Ramchandra Temple, Jalchak, Pingla, Midnapore
iii) Rameshwar Temple Rajnagar, Panskura, Midnapore

d) Europeans smoking tobacco through smoking gadgets

i) Temple of chowdhury family Gayenpara, Khirpai Midnapore
ii) Radhagobinda & Radharaman Temple Gobindapur, Daspur, Midnapore

e) Man under toxic influence enjoying sexual pleasure

Banka Rai Temple— Laoda Daspur, Midnapore

f) Landlords with smoking gadgets in a pleasure trip on Palanquin

i) Kantaji Temple, Kantanagar Dinajpore.
ii) Gopinath Temple, Daspur, Midnapore

g) Landlord smoking in a luxurious style on a sailing boat—

Janakiballav Temple, Tilantapara, (Sabang) Midnapore

24 Erotic Scenes

The erotic emotions of the people and the biological as well as instinctual habits transforming to union of genders, found their space in the ritualistic culture of Bengal since the ancient past. The social approval of such culture is evident in ornamentation of religious edificies in late mediaeval Bengal. The terracotta artists at a later stage with the decline of canonical prescriptions of the institution and also due to erosion of the aesthetc judgement of excellence of the artistic merits, displayed unhestitatingly the erotic plaques with elements of crude materiality especially in the district of Midnapore and Howrah. The picturisation of such erotic actions has many a time crossed the limits of common accepted standards, evidencing elements of greater openness in such activities during late mediaeval period in Bengal. Some of the specific observations in this regard are mentioned hereunder.

Common postures

1) Sitala Temple— Utter Dhankhal, Daspur, Midnapore
2) Khipteswari Temple— Utter Barh, Daspur, Midnapore
3) Sridhara Temple— Katan, Ghatal, Midnapore
4) Simhavahini Temple— Krishnapore, Kharar, Ghatal, Midnapore
5) Umapati Siva Temple— Gangadaspur, Chandrakona, Midnapore
6) Taraknath Temple— Gobindapur, Panskura, Midnapore
7) Laxmi Janardan Temple— Ghoshpur, Keshpur, Midnapore
8) Dharmaraj Temple— Jaikrishnapur, Debra, Midnapore

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9) Sridharjiu Temple— Dalapatipur, Ghatal, Midnapore
10) Raghunath Temple— Dandipur, Pingla, Midnapore
11) Khatteswar Siva Temple— Khalna, Howrah
12) Shyamsundarjiu Temple— Jhikhira, Howrah.
13) Sitaram Temple— Ghoshpara, Jhikhira, Howrah.
14) Gajalakshmi Temple— Bhandargarchha, Howrah.
15) Swayambhulinga Naramadhab Temple— Manikura, Howrah.
16) Sridharnath Jiu Rashmancha— Sitapur, Howrah
17) Banka Rai Temple— Laoda, Daspur, Midnapore

Special observation

1) Open erotic practices of public women	Damodarjiu Temple and Rashmancha— Kalyanpur Howrah, (Since non existent)
2). Animal copulation	(i) Panchanan Temple Sonakhali, Daspur, Midnapore (ii) Laxmi Varaha Temple, Karkai, Midnapore
3) Swans in erotic action	Shyamsundarjiu Temple, Jhikhira, Howrah
4) Nude woman sitting and standing in erotic contemlations	Banka Rai Temple, Laoda, Daspur, Midnapore
5) Undressed seducing woman committing nuisance in the month of a man	i) Radhagobinda Temple, Chaipat, Daspur, Midnapore ii) Rajrajeswar Temple, Chaipat, Daspur, Midnapore iii) Radhakrishna Temple, Jalchak, Pingla, Midnapore
6) Undressed couple in crude amorous posture	Ramchandra Temple, Jalchak, Pingla, Midnapore
7) Nude women in perfume luxury	Ramchandra Temple, Jalchak, Pingla, Midnapore
8) Landlord in leisured luxury surrounded by public women	Siva Temple, Pingla, Midnapore
9) An intoxicated man enjoying sexual pleasure	Banka Rai Temple, Laoda, Daspur, Midnapore
10) Instructive display of erotic actions	Laxmi Janardan temple,Teparpara, Midnapore
11)Foreigners in erotic action	Shihavahuni Temple, Krishnapur, Midnapore. Lakshmijanardan Temple, Debipore, Memari, Bardhaman

25 Dress and ornaments

Dress being a marked characteristic culture— revealing tastes and tendencies of the people, are clearly indicated in the terracotta art depictions of late mediaeval Bengal. The tastes and

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fashions being observed in such sculptures are fascinating human documents, which show minutest details of costumes and jewellery executed by the terracotta artists of Bengal.

It is appropriate to mention here that the period we are concerned which is saddled with foreign invasions or influences and as a common demoninator of Indian costume culture, Bengal used to bear the same traits and tendencies with minor local variations incorporating periodical changes due to cultural assimilation— may be with minor differences in degree compared to other Indian counterparts. We are further confronted with the different traditions of propriety and decorum peculiar to the extent of drapperies of villages, towns of men, women, queens, housewives and the rest.

Women costumes

We have a vast conglomeration of woman figures in the terracotta art decoration from intimate household engagements and tying up with family bonds to the waiting and watching from the interiors to the external worlds. We further observe princely and divine women as well as these engaged in dancing actions and performing music. In brief, women from every walk of life occupied a major place in the said artworks.

Mediaeval women in Bengal belonging to the upper and the lower class are shown as wearing dress over the upper bodies with saree ends thrown casually over one shoulder. This is in sharp contrast of ancient potraiture of women as wearing no upper garment or wearing a thin veil like diaphanous gauze scarf. Then the foreigners and the maid servants of the royalty wore costumes and materials of various designs to cover their breasts properly. The gradual adoption of choli or the bodies or blouse was observed covering the front only, the hook being left bare since Mughal period. Women used to wear saris covering their hips. thrown over one sholder and allowed to fall back over the other. The piece of cloth is rapped rounded their waists with or without upper garment. Saree in the said form was reported to be developed from its older form through lenghening of the other garments like north Indian 'Dupatta' or orhni, being tucked into the waistband.

We further observe some women wearing costumes, which is a kind of half saree, somewhat like a stole tucked into the waist band at one point or allowed to hang freely in front half covering the breasts and only partially the skirt like petticoat that is worn underneath.

Charles Fabri observed while dealing with Indian dress (P No. 21-Delhi 1977) "In these early periods sewn garments were not worn by women at all and only very rarely by men, mainly the military and we meet the first stitched pieces in about 11th century. The army wore tailored and sewn coats from the third century BC, but women had no sewn skirts before the 13th Century.

In fact the typical three piece dress of Indian women was the bodice (choli) and skirt (ghagra) and the headkerchief (orni); the first two were sewn and tailored garments unknown in pre-Islamic times, when only military coats were sewn. While the three piece garments were in limited use in Bengal, the use of saree was more during Late mediaeval era.

The sarees of varieties of thickness and length, is thrown across the back of the neck casually passed over the arm, sometimes used also to cover the head.

It is also evident in some of the depictions that a princess, gown like frock reaching from the neck down to the ancles with long sleeves and often with a narrow waist, appears as costumes, which are sewn with running stitches.

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Foreign women appearing on the terracotta plaques, are found wearing long sleeved garments with a plastorn infornt, probably bare at the back. The practice of wearing the long sleeved plastorn blouse had its own influence in the contemporary costume culture of Bengal.

The local nomenclatures of Kanchuk or Kurpasak or Angika represented piece cloths for the women and were in use with variations taken place from time to time. The 'Nichol', yet another type of women garment was also used to cover their heads.

The cloths were reported to be manufactured from the following materials as per literary evidences.

a) Khauma— This type of cloth was reported to be manufactured from the natural yarns derived from bark of trees and also from Jute or hemp.

b) Aurna— Manufactured from the wools derived from Buffalo or other animals.

c) Kaushik or Kausheo— Silk cloth.

There had been beliefs of auspicious or inauspicious elements in such cloths for different purposes.

Women Ornaments

Jewellery like other fashions did not change drastically, particularly in India, where personal ornaments are inherited and worn by subsequent generations and preserved as tradition.

Anklets, Necklaces, earrings, diadems were worn by women of different classes irrespective or their social status, the only difference being the medium of high, low or zero costs. Aristocratic women are found to be wearing ornaments of superbly designed chased metal, elegantly set stones, ingeniously figured anklets, bracelets, and armlets. Though bead and pearl necklaces abound, there were many other forms of neck ornaments, including pendants and moon shaped breast ornaments of chased gold and silvers. The dancing girls and musicians wore elaborate jewelleries might be of mediums of lesser costs or tinsels.

As per Indian tradition the ornaments are generally of four categories.

a) Abedhya— Earrings and other ear ornaments.

b) Bandhniya— Waistband, belt or girdle worn by woman.

c) Khepya—Anklets, armlets bracelets and ornamentation of costumes

d) Aropya— Necklces of all va.'eties' worn by women

Some of the nomenclatures of the varieties of ornaments which were in vogue are cited hereunder.

a) Ornaments on the head— Crownlike ornaments known as 'Balpasya' or 'Paritathya'. Ornaments to decorate forehead were known as 'Patrapasya' or 'Lalatika'

b) Ornament on the ear— The frontside ear rings were popularly known as 'Karnika' or 'Talpatra'. Those worn on the backside were known as 'Utkhipika', 'Karnandu' or 'Batika'.

c) Ornaments on the neck— a) i) Graibeyak ii) 'Lalantika' when made of gold known as 'Pralambika' and when made of jewels called 'Virasutrika'.

b) Har Muktabali— Composed of a series of Design/balls which were known as 'Jasthi' 'Lata' 'Shar' and 'Shari'

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d) Finger ornaments— Called 'Angulia' or 'Urmika'

e) Waist ornaments— 'Mekhala' 'Kanchi' 'Saptaki', 'Rasana' and 'Sarson'.

f) Anklets— Anklet set with small bells called 'Nupur'

g) Armlets— Armlet known as Keyur worn on the upper arm, Katak or Balay worn on the lower arm and Kankana below the position of Katak or Balay.

Though it is difficult to identify each of the ornaments worn by women in each of the depiction, it can be said that the position of the ornaments and the details of decoration apparing thereon signify use of such ornaments in the mediaeval/Late mediaeval Bengal.

Male Costume

In India kings like other men wear no upper garment unless they proceed to war. In Northern India, a kind of blanket or wrap, somewhat like a modern chadar is sometimes worn loosely over the shoulder and allowed to fall one way or the other. In Bengal we also find similar such practice of keeping man's breasts bare in ancient times. Dhoti as lower garment continued to remain in use for quite a long time with variation in length sometimes longer, sometime shorter. The use of Jama– the buttoned coat of the Mughals was also gradually adopted in Bengal at a later stage particularly by upper class men including palace servants and warriors. Men dressed themselves in imitation of court wear and also by elegant turbans, which became widely adapted, came to Bengal in limited use. The upper classmen in Bengal also appear to have adopted the wear of rich brocade Jamas with boldly developed sash, the cummerband or rather the Patka. The kind of Patka starts as a narrow band on the stomach and broadens out near the foot into a great expanse of decorated cloth as inverted 'V' shape.

The use of ornaments of the male also appears to be significant in the late mediaeval Bengal. The male particularly royal male also used to wear anklets, bracelets, armlets and even necklaces as well as earrings. Though the shapes and designs used to differ slightly to those used by females, the use of jewelleries as personal ornaments of men during those days cannot be denied.

The said propositions are amply evidenced in terracotta figuration of male on temples of Late mediaeval Bengal.

Military uniform

Soliders and men at arms constituted a seperate class in dress. From the earliest times in sculptural and pictoral representation they appear wearing a coat or coat of mail (the chains are oftenly indicated) that bear a singular resemblance to Greek, or rather Roman military wear. The officers and rank and file soldiers can be identified only looking into the absence of turbans on the laters' heads.

In late mediaeval Bengal temples we find intensive picturisation of army movement scenes— either indigenous or mughal solidiers or the European solidiers— either cavalry or artillary.

The uniforms of the Indian army were found very common having the mail coat, the belt carrying side arms like swords daggers, dirks etc. use of boot was however very rare. The horserider soldiers also had the same costumes sometimes wearing shoes with arms/ammunation

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in the hands. The European soldiers were observed in their stern. simple and functional uniforms with coats pants, belts and boots with fire arms like guns in hand.

Such depictions are very frequent and some such movements have already been cited in the paragraph on foreigners hereinbefore.

Other varieties of utilities

Footwears— The use of footwears appears to be restricted with the upper class communities and the rank and file appears mostly barefooted. As per literary as well as pictorial revelations of the images of deities as well as royal men or soldiers, the following varieties of footwears were found to be used.

a) Paduka— representing sandals of leather or wood.

b) Upanha— two types of such footwears with nomenclatures 'Anupdina', 'Ajanu patra charn'— (long boots extended up the knee)

c) Ajnanasupatrachar— most celebrated shoes worn by royal people or gods.

Umbrellas— Umbrellas were considered both as signs of royalty and utility for the daily life of the people. In pictorial depictions of terracotta plaques, we find both these types existing in varities of cases. Umbrellas as per literary revelation are primarily of two types (a) Sadanda (umbrellas which can be opened or closed) (b) Niradanda (static). There had been variation in the number of spokes, which are some times increased even upto hundred depending upon the status of the users.

The royal umbrellas also as per literary revelation are reported to be of three varities, such as

a) Prasadchinha— With wooden spines, often profusely decorated crowned by golden pitcher.

b) Kanakdanda— Multipurpose umbrellas crowned by golden pitcher and elaborately ornamented. with jewels, diamonds and other precious stones.

c) Nabadanda— used for celebration of auspicious occassions like coronation, marriage, etc, and profusely ornamented by the golden pitchers, fans, images of swans etc.

Other utilities

a) Nichol— piece of cloth appears to be used for ornamenting palenquins

b) Kuth or Jhul— Piece of cloth with varieties of coloured ornamentation used for covering the backs of royal elephants.

Such utility are also evident in terracotta plaques containting images of palenquins and royal elephants.

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Chapter V

THE CRAFT ORGANISATION

1. *The patrons or promoters of temples in the cross section of socio economic index*

According to historical and archaeological records, stratification was present in India that characterized society even in the ancient days. The hierarchical arrangements were the natural order of things particularly of the Brahmans who occupied the top of the hierarchy in the caste stratification. The idea was also widespread that a social hierarchy was a natural and unavoidable feature of social life. There were noble and commoners— a few who had many and a many who had few. The poor obeyed and served the few who were powerful and rich and who were believed to be of superior origin. The property, power and prestige were the attributes which became mutually contributory and complimentary to each other. The ubiquity of the stratification provided a tangential importance to societies whose traditions were largely oral and where the universality of some form of socially structured and sanctioned inequality of power, property and prestige existed.

The complex social and cultural patterns arising out of incessant external invasions, repeated migrations, strong religious orthodoxy and co existence as well as contradictions of rudimentary, radical and pragmatic social waves and movements, have been discussed separately in different chapters of the book. Nevertheless the patterns of social superiority and inferiority did not remain subjects of static definitions and they became relevant only when they were socially recognized and given importance of being incorporated into the beliefs, attitudes and values of the people. The distribution of rewards and distinction at any given moment was generally governed by conventional rules which were likely to reflect the interests of those who had enough power to enforce the rules they deemed best. Most persons did conform to such rules even though they were at the lowest rungs of the ladder of stratification. Such acceptance of the of the way of life by even the most demeaned and deprived segments of the population signified the strength of the norms, on which the ruling class maintained the control and capacity to enforce.

Yet another implication of the social aspect of stratification particularly in the Indian context, concerned the way in which the norms of the community were carried down from generation generation. There is no evidence that any kind of mentality— slave ruling or otherwise was biologically inherited. The social transmission or socialization into the norms from one generation

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to the next was indispensable to the continuity of these norms. The process of socialization in India had its own patterns with greater permanence, but had its inherent instability in the process of growth and expansion. When we speak about the institutional interdependencies or institutional interrelationships, we mean the existing stratification arrangements were affected by and had effects upon such other matters as politics, kinship, marriage and the family, economics, education and religion.

Stratification in Bengal was socially patterned because

a) The make up of the system of stratification was dependent upon conventionally ascribed meanings and socially defined criteria and prescriptions.
b) Norms and sanctions had been the key ingredients in the shaping and maintenance of the system.
c) The system might be unstable at least to some degree because socialization was never identical throughout the society and because of other disturbing factors, such as differential rates of birth in different strata.
d) The system of stratification was intimately connected both as affector and affected, with other systems of the society such as political, familial, economic and caste as well as religious institutions.

The emergent socio political scenario in the Mughal province of Bengal which was administered according to the standardized procedures of the empire in the 16th/17th century AD and in which its Governors, imperial corps of Manasabdars remained at the helm of affairs. Their exploits at individuals left no mark in the local tradition.

As center of political power, cultural aspiration however existed among the hereditary ruling families who did acknowledge the titular supremacy of the empire. The traditional classes as imperatively coordinated of unequal authority as required by the social structure, were amalgamated in a common approach to such cultural aspirations for ritual compulsions as per social bond.

The decay in the economic and political authority of the higher caste people as well as the sovereign owners of the social production gave the society a reality of coherence and a sense of common destiny along with the rank and file in the social stratification. The rural communes however remained confined to their internal contrasts with inequality of opportunities and situations providing remote scopes of social mobility in the ladders of wealth, prestige and power. The distributional changes did not show different ways for persons other than those belonging to the faith of the rulers or adhering to the route of switchover of the religious beliefs. The section of people resorting to the hunt for upward mobility having intergenerational movement took shelter to the emerged hierarchy in the jurisdiction of the conqueror rulers, which was also being shared by hitherto privileged class of landholders or revenue collectors for the adminstrative convenience of the rulers. The volume and pattern of the mobility at the relevant time were somewhat on the move as there had been increasing rigidity in the caste structure of the traditional Hindu community. The statuses in the Hindu community were generally acquired by inheritance and the caste as well as caste systems were characterized by a great preponderance of such status

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inheritance. The coming of British as conquerors after Clive's encounter in Plassey in 1757 and the later developments in regard to veiled predominance secured by them did not cause substantial changes in the social stratification under the new colonial administration. The real changes took place with the promulgation of the permanent settlement in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis causing an unprecedented decadence of the moral and political values in the rural Bengal. The settlement in practice resulted to insurmountable revenue debts of the traditional village Zamindars who were tied up in social bond with the common people and their rights were auctioned in favour of parasitic city dweller banians and unscrupulous intermediaries in unholy nexus with the British Raj. The new settlers did not have any root in the soils and caused disastrous effects in the high moral and spiritual values of the rural population.

The temple construction activities in the late mediaeval Bengal were taken up and patronized by the traditional landlords and Rajas in their respective territories, who considered the same as their sacred obligations not only to their worshipped deities but also to their own subjects in the greater families of their jurisdiction. The socio political status of the Rajas in the functional hierarchy have already been elaborated in the earlier chapters of the book. Neverthless as spiritual guardian of their respective territories they themselves undertook construction and elaborate beautification of the temple edifices in keeping with their available means, tastes and outlook, thereby in the process recognized the natural talents and abilities of the highly creative artists in their own language.

The wave of Vaishnava mysticism in the Bhakti cult promulgated by Chaitanyadev waging war against the caste and status barriers in the sixteenth century generated resurrection in the spheres of spiritual, moral and ethical norms and procedures, thereby causing structural mobility in the degenerated traditional society devoid of positivism. Since sixteenth century AD, the local power holders or landlords who were also dispossesed of the rights of sovereign political and economic administration of their estates, became increasingly tied up with the spiritual and cultural life of their respective subjects who were flooded by the greater humanitarian elements of the Bhakti waves at the relevant time. The theological or philosophical attributes of the movement as recorded by the six Vrindavana Goswamins also contained obligations for the erection of temple edifices for community worship and the same was considered to be a sacred task on the part of a devotee engaging himself or herself in such activities irrespective of status, power or wealth.

The greater accessibility of people in the sphere of the holy or sacred task provided wider space for establishment of temples. The local landlords, Rajas or Zamindar dynasties took the lead of engaging themselves in construction of the gems of brief but exquisite temples in the local dialects with profuse ornamentation and architectural novelties. This particular section of the patrons did neither possess the extent of wealth to match their counterparts of the imperial dynasties of the other parts of India to go for massive and elaborate architectural wonders nor did have the adequate revenue support for mobilization of wealth from other sources or through necessary political or spiritual manouvre by any means whatsoever. Hence these masterpieces

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of the Bengal architecture pertaining to the seventeenth century or early eithteenth century AD earned the novelities of sensuous and aesthetic creativities of the commoners engaged in hereditary vocations who had more sensitive and spiritual passions for the works rather then urge for sanctific and canonical height of creativity of the designated artists belonging to and representing the aesthetic excellence of the ancient and proto mediaeval institutional school of the Indian art.

More so, at this crucial phase of social stratification the internal forms and functions of social inequality became subdued in as much the ideals of Bhakti under the spiritual paragons of Vaishnava mysticism carried the same sets of values for all the functional tiers of the society. The same message of radicalism was being interpreted in their respective terms, languages or versions by the different sections of the social hierarchy having accepted the basic tenets of the mitigation of caste antagonism and spiritual rights of the masses in general. Neverthless during the said two centuries the traditional social bonds under the spiritual authority of the Brahamanical priesthood persisted in different forms as codified by the Vrindavana Goswamins and we find meticulous adherence of the prescribed norms and practices of art and architecture in the temples constructed during the period mostly by the Rajas or big landlords in contemplation of a distinguished status which in fact eroded in the empire of new imperial powers at the helm of affairs. Despite such fact we find profuse infiltration of the forms and motifs of the non institutional overtone in the traditional decorative arrangements, which were more sophisticated, structured and systematized. The Rajas of the estates of Bishnupur, Dinajpore, Bardhaman, Puthia (Rajshahi), Naldanga (Jhinaidaha) and also some others either engaged themselves in construction of temples or patronized such constructions in their respective estates at different palces. The period represents an era of expansion and acceleration of the architectural and art activities presenting before of us a series of profusely ornamented or meritorious architectural edifices, some of which are as under :

a) Shyam Rai Temple, Jor Bangla Temple, Madanmohan Temple, Khar Bangla Temple and various others at Bishnupur and many other temples at different other places in the district of Bankura.
b) Kantaji Temple at Kantanagar, Dinajpore, Gobindanagar Temple (Thakurgaon), Dinajpore.
c) Pratapeswar Temple, Lalji Temple, Krishnachandra Temple, Rupeshwar Temple and 108 Siva Temples at Ambika Kalna, Bardhaman.
d) Sandhya temple Siva Temple, Gobinda Temple and Dolmancha at Puthia, Rajshahi.
e) Ganesh temple, Siva Temple, Siddheswari Temple, Gopalbari Temple, Rameshwari Temple, Mahadev Temple, Taranath Temple etc at Naldanga, Jhinaidaha.

The trend is more evident in the eastern part of Bengal which is presently in Bangladesh, where the number of hereditary Rajas and Zaminders in the traditional settlements during the seventeenth/early eighteenth century were more.

In fact, the social psychology of the people in the contemporary stratification of race, gender, religion and occupation within the framework of the feudal superstructure bearing the colonial shades had the inherent aspects of individual's aspirations for distinct identification in the context

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of the social categories assuming importance. The economically and politically privileged class of people associated themselves with the descriptive social identity in an evaluation which imparted positive status. The social identity approach was derived from the awareness of comparing themselves on dimensions of conformity of spiritual obligations such as construction of temples for community worship which would ensure a self concept of positive distinctiveness. Social mobility strategies of the discriminated caste victims involved attempts to come out of the stigmas to confirm their appropriateness in the social identity perspectives. The social creativity strategies also sought to change the dimension, value or focus of the process of comparison in which the Brahmans or Kayasthas prevailed upon as the leaders in the social as well as spiritual perceptions through the operation of the process in the social substratum i,e, consequences of the economic relations or structures of the power.

This particular form of functionalism became possible with the decline of the traditional institutions of power in the political domain of the imperial forces including the British in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The time space distanciation emanated an interaction between the different social groups or forces which resulted to reproduction of the institutions. The opportunities of privilege were redistributed according to the nexus of actions in the political and economic spheres of the imperial rulers, consequent upon which the beneficiaries in the new integration irrespective of their past social or caste identity attempted for acquisition of the moral, personal and social identities as self concept of values.

Though the organised priesthood continued to remain with the Brahmans yet another community of Vaishnava worshippers emerged in the process of regeneration of the Bhakti cult who were popularly known as Mohanatas as already stated. The patrons contemplating themselves for funding such temple construction activities and documenting their names through inscriptions as donors for the sacred act conferred upon such priests the jobs of routine worship. They also appointed persons in trust for administration of the temples as well as for mobilization of resources for day to day operations or rituals or celebrations out of incomes from the lands donated in the name of the worshipped deity. The lands vested in the name of the god did not have the scopes of marketability, disposal or otherwise alienation and therefore considered to be of perennial and absolute title in favour of the worshipped deity. This was done with the aim of providing such transactions the character of permanence even in the absence of the patron-donor and with a view to ensuring that the institution of temples does not become a place of earthly or material conflicts of interest. Scrutiny of such deed of donation reveals the nature of transaction underlying such construction of temples in majority of the cases.

Interestingly in the process of cult syncretisation as indicated hereinbefore in the earlier chapters of this book, the appearance of the tribal or folk deities probably with Buddhist origins particularly of Dharma in the appendices of the institutional worship made certain distinct changes in the priesthood as well as in the mode in worship, a few of which are cited hereunder :

a) Atchala temple of Bankura Rai (Dharmaraj) at Baital (Bankura). The hereditry priesthood is from the community of Bagdi Tribe locally known as Tentule Bagdi.

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b) Bankura Rai Temple (Tortoise faced Dharmaraj) at Bhagalpur (Bankura). The hereditary priests are from the community of Bagdi Tribe (Kansaikulia Type having the title of 'Pandit')

c) Sitalanarayan Dharmaraj temple at Rajgram (Jaipur) Bankura. Though the priests are Brahmins, the worship cannot be started before the local Pandit of 'Dom' tribe recites rhymes dedicated to the deity.

d) Bankura Rai (Dharmaraj) temple at Indus, Bankura. The hereditary priests are from Sutradhar community.

e) The Kurmamurthi Dharmaraj (Tortoise faced Dharma) temple at Kalikata (Amta) in the district of Howrah : Priests from Deyashi Family.

Neverthless such patronization of the temple construction particularly during the later eighteenth and nineteenth century became an acceptable avenue for upward social mobility in so far as the social status was concerned. It is not deniable that in the process of social re-stratification arising out of redistribution of wealth owing to the fiscal reinforcement by the imperial rulers, a new set of beneficiaries emerged, who were mostly traders or mercantile agents and/or intermediaries or sub title holders of the revenue settlements. Many of such beneficiaries were belonging to non Brahmin or backward caste origin. The extent of wealth earned by such section of people cannot be said to be flabby, but they preferred to be in the line of intra generational or inter generational social mobility through acquiring a definite status in the society.

From some available evidences we are able to estimate the expenditure for construction of such brick temples, a few of which may be indicated as under.

a) A large Pancharatna terracotta temple of Chattapadhyaya family at Chattopadhyapara in the village of Charkalgram under Nanur Police station, Birbhum was constructed at a total cost of Rs 445.75 in 1245 BS (1838 AD), as per temple inscription available (Ref Page 49-Bankura Jelar Purakirti— Amiya Bandopadhyay and Page 37 of Birbhum Jelar Purakirti— Deb Kumar Chakraborty).

b) An inscription from the Sitala Dalan Temple of Bera Family at Dihi Chetua established in the year 1883 further reveals that the construction costs were Rs 350.00 at that time. (Ref. Page 87 of Purakirti Samiksha— Medinipur— Tarapada Santra)

Based upon the said evidences in can be stated that such expenditures for construction of the miniaturized but graceful shrines were within the manageable budgets of the middle class burgeoning people, which became in turn, one of the major contributory factors for efflorescence of the art activity in the late mediaeval Bengal.

However a few precedents for such temple construction activities undertaken by the non Brahmin communities of Bene, Sankhabanik, Gandhabanik, Subarnabanik, Mayra, Tantubai, Mahishya, Sadgop, Karmakar, Tily, Modak, Tambuli sects etc. in the caste stratification in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century AD are being quoted hereunder.

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Bankura

a) Dalan Temple at Bajarpara, Indas— Rakshit family— late eighteenth Century.
b) Pancharatna Vishnu Temple at Kadasole— Ghorui Family— late eighteenth Century.
c) Radhadamodar Pancharatna at Tantipara, Krishnanagar. Paramanik family— late eighteenth Century.
d) Damodar Atchala Temple at Krishnagar— Kundu family— late eighteenth Century.
e) Dalanmandir at Halderpara, Kotulpur— Halder family, early nineteenth Century.
f) Damodar Temple (Navaratna), Kotulpur : Nandi family early nineteenth Century.
g) Pancharatna Damodar Temple, Jibta : Ray family, 1833 AD.
h) Atchala temple at Patrasayer— Karmakar family— nineteenth Century.
i) Sridhar Temple at Paharpur— Nandi family— nineteenth Century.
j) Radhdamodar Temple at Bankadaha : Guru Charan Das 1845 AD.
k) Jora Sivmandir at Balsi : Barat Family (Modak) nineteenth Century.
l) Pancharatna Temple at Bajarpara, Balsi : Chanda family. nineteenth Century.
m) Radhadamodar Pancharatna Temple at Baital- Laha family. nineteenth Century.
n) Jagatgauri Temple at Napitpara, Rautkhand : Mondal family— 1752 AD.
o) Pancharatna Temple at Napitpara, Rautkhanda : De family- nineteenth Century.
p) Sridhar Temple at Rajgram, Bankura, : Dutta family— nineteenth Century.
q) Pancharatna Temple at Sriramporepara, Rajgram, Bankura : Kundu Family— nineteenth century.
r) Radhadamodar Temple at Saspur : De family, nineteenth Century.
s) Sridhara temple, Sonamukhi : Das family— 1845 AD.
t) Siva Temple at Sonamukhi : Chanda family— nineteenth Century.

Midnapore

a) Simhavahini Temple at Konnagar, Ghatal : Harihar Karmakar 1795 AD.
b) Tulshimancha of De family, Gambhirnagar, Ghatal : De family, nineteenth Century.
c) Radhakrishna Temple at Mitrasenpur, Chandrakona : Das family, 1780 AD.
d) Radhadamodar (Pancharatna) Temple at Ramjivanpur-Chandrakona : De family 1827 AD
e) Sridhar Chandni Temple at Palpara, Ramjivanpur : Pal family 1831 AD.
f) Sridhar Chandni Temple at Khirpai : Sivaprasad De : 1864 AD.
g) Tulshimancha at Ilambazar, Chandrakona : Jivan Krishna Das and Radhasahyam Das 1886 AD.
h) Jagannath Deul Temple at Dihi Bahiri (Contai) : Bibhishan Das— 1584 AD.
i) Shyamsundar Deul at Paikbheri (Bhagawanpur) : Sitaram Bera 1730 AD.
j) Ganga Temple at Gaura (Daspur) : Ramkishore Pramanik 1880 AD.

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k) Sridhar Temple at Palaspai : Gobinda Ram Maity— 1834 AD.
l) Gangadhar Temple and Sitala Temple at Jotmuri : Sanyasi Charan Jana and Haricharan Jana—1828 AD
m) Bishalakshi Temple at Chaipat : Kameshwar Deb Bharati 1838 AD.
n) Radhagobinda Temple and Rashmancha-Mangloi : Thakurdas Maity 1859 AD.

Howrah

a) Sridharnathjiu Temple at Asanda, Udainarayanpur, : Maity family 1789 AD.
b) Sitaramjiu Temple at Asanda, Udainarayanpur, : Bera Family— Late 18th Century.
c) Umapati Siva Temple at Ichhapur : Bera family 1867 AD.
c) Octagonal Rashmancha at Orphuli : Maity family 19th Century, AD.
d) Siva Temple at Kalikata (Amta) : Karar Family- 19th Century.
e) Rameshwar Siva and Pareshnath Siva Temples at Kalyanchak : Dwari family 1792 AD.
f) Damodar Jiu Temple at Kalyanpur : Harekrishna Pal, 1786 AD.
g) Rashmancha at Kumarpur : Dwari Family. 19th Century.
h) Santinath Siva Temple at Khempur : Bera Family, 1853 AD.
i) Damodarjiu Temple at Ganga, Udainarayanpur : Kolay family, 1788 AD.
j) Dharmaraj Temple at Gourangachak : Bodhak family, 1762 AD.
k) Sridharjiu Temple at Jangalpara : Maji family— 1774 AD.
l) Saptarath Sikhara Siva Temple at Jayanti (Amta) : Laha family, 1827 AD.
m) Atchala Siva Temple at Pargustia (Jagatballavpur) : Adak family, 1827 AD.
n) Lakshmijanardanjiu Temple at Baradabarh (Shyampur) : Chhaule and Adak family. 18th Century.

The above illustrative list indicates that the intensive temple construction activity during the said period was undertaken and patronized by the people in deriving the traditions mostly form the instituion of royal patronage or the spiritual hierarchy in the earlier ages when inequality persisted in the play of power. The radicalism of the Bengal Vaishnavism rapidly became reinforced attaching those with unequal powers in fold of universal rights preached to be the sanction of divinities. The visible and legitimate norms lent credence to shifting of formal political controls and the levels of coercive powers of the earlier spiritual institutions.

Interestingly enough, the local community powers represented by elites became subdued and sections of people acquiring resources through redistribution of titles or sub titles of land or through exploiting the opportunities of trade and commerce in the cross section of the socio economic index sought for intra generation and intergeneration upward social mobility for honour, power and a number of statuses through discharge of specific rights and duties including patronization of the community platform of temples. In the process, the exclusiveness of caste identity as a parameter in the socio economic index in the patterned system of community relations lost its relevance. At this juncture, Bengal exposed itself to the new depth of cultural stratification and

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synthesis. The situation emerged became conducive for promotion of culture, but turned sensitive because the occupational titles known to be prestige scores and those stood for general socio eonomic standing suffered gradual obsolescence in the colonial domain of the British empire. The attitudes, values, ideologies and beliefs interacted with the variation in the system of stratification did not ultimately survive and trapped in the net of immobility once again at a later stage with the comprador trading community who had no spiritual or aesthetic motivation or commitment earning hierarchical and authoritarian political standing in the new social order coming of fray. Decadence of the great tradition became imminent in the second half of the nineteenth century when gradual distortion, crude realism and corrupted art motifs occupied the space.

II. Social art, collective art or community art— a brief profile of the artists.

Development of the art practices and identity of the craftsmen or artists

From the nature and circumstances of the art practices developed since the days of early history of Bengal succeeding through the mediaeval and late mediaeval ages, it can be very well said that a community of artists engaged in the architectural and constructuion activities of religious edifies emerged on the soil of Bengal who earned differentiated and distinguished status in the social as well as caste or racial stratification.

In this regard we can find that a common phenomenon of spiritual discrimination continued to exist in the accepted norms of stratification in which unequal amounts of property, prestige, power and education affected the caste or racial status of the persons engaged in manual labour. At the same time it cannot be denied that they had defined or definite role to play in the social format and in the said sphere, they were considered indispensable. The inequalities in the basic resources however did not exert a very major influence on the behavioral faculties of creativity of the artists who belived in the subjectivity of meaningfulness of life in performing their best in devotion to god, who is akin to or their best neighbour. However the objectivity was not lost in so far as such engagement in work was the means for living and in which the group orientation prevailed upon the individual perceptions and capabilities.

The craftsmen or artists accepted the institutional patterns and the ways in which they performed their major institutional roles in guilds. The nature of transactions governing their engagement in temple construction activities in the late mediaeval Bengal as evidenced in different sources and circumstantial factors, may be enumerated as under :

a. The community of the craftsmen was identified by the aggregate of peoples in a defined caste— which formed the basis of aggregation.
b. The sense is implicit in the nomenclature of the craftsmen disclosed by themselves as pertaining to their community status in several inscriptions on terracotta plaques located at and belonging to different temples in late mediaeval Bengal.

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c. The craftsmen in the tier of caste stratification were mostly found to be hailing from Sutradhar or Chhutar community barring a few exceptional cases where the involvement of other communities is evident.

d. The shape of the community with its role specific rights and duties was hereditary and intergenerational in as much as the succeeding generations adapted the skill and creativity in the ordinary course of living workshop process as the most treasured human conditions.

e. There had been formation of guilds with a group of artisans specialized in different faculties with a leader conceptualizing the proposed architectural form in keeping with the estimated budget of the promoter or donor. The size and the dimension of the proposed edifices used to be planned in keeping with the affordability and taste of the promoters.

f. It is surmised that the construction works were used to be undertaken on turn key contractual basis as a commercial venture by the leader of the guild taking up the contract through bilateral negotiations.

g. There used to be a series of choices or options in the hands of the guild leader who did presumbly maintain blue prints of the multiple choices or options to be tendered to the promoters for securing the contract. The promoters signified their approval based upon which the final layout or plan used to take shape.

h. The artists or craftsmen used to establish a temporary site camp during the period of construction to perform the activities from the very beginning and the entire activity was intensively supervised by the leader in keeping with his conceptualized as well as approved form of the promoter.

i. The guilds of the artists used to be mobile and were required to shift themselves from place to place according to the availability of work contracts in different districts. Different groups of artists claiming to be architects of different temples were found to be indicating their places of settlements or habitation in other districts as distinguishing marks of individual or communal identity.

j. The artists or the craftsmen built up their settlements in different locations and they used to identify themselves along with the names of their village. The community living as a whole used to enrich the faculty of creativity and every member of the community acquired the perception and skill which were permeated through the community beliefs, practices as well as other genetic and functional mediations.

It is now considered imperative to discusss in brief the profile of the caste or clans of the Sutradhara community who were the vanguards of the art practices or activities in mediaeval Bengal in different mediums or motifs distinguishing themselves in the given cultural tradition. Incidentally it is worthwhile mentioning that their esteemed position could not be attained by mere spontaneous development but through coherence and cognitive development in recalling the historical cultural experience and also through experimenting new cognitive possibilities.

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The community of Sutradhara or Chhutar (Wood carvers or carpenters)

There are several mythological or literary indications on the origin of the caste, though reliable evidences supporting such surmises are still lacking. The Sutradharas of the Rarh region of Bengal consider themselves as the descendants of Lord Viswakarma— who is the supreme artist in the divine order. In one such myths of this direction, five Brahmans were born out of the five mouths of Lord Viswakarma. They were Manu, Maya, Twasta, Silpi and Dwaibagya. It was further in the process that such five sons of Lord Viswakarma caused birth of their respective sons popularly known as Lauhakar (Blacksmith), Kasthakar (wood carvers or carpenters), Tamrakar (Coppersmith), Shilakar (Stone carvers) and Suvarnakar (Goldsmith). (Chapter VI, Viswakarma Kulchandrika, Nagarkhanda, Skandapuran).

The composers of Purana used to adopt the strategies of glorification of manual labour at the stage of a significant era of transition, when the institution of Hinduism lost its political and economic domination during the Muslim rule in Bengal. Soldiers and other officials of the hitherto Hindu or Buddhist empires having lost their jobs diverted themselves to their respective rural settlements, where there had been disequilibrium in the economic stratification. People who had been staying out from their ancestral profession for long became disinclined to take up such profession as the same did tantamount to downward mobility in the social hierarchy. It therefore became imperative for the intellectual forerunners to inculcate the message of divnity of manual labour in the bottom line of the society to ensure a better cohesion and solidarity in the masses in the interest of uninterrupted social production. Accordingly the vital professional segments in the social production were tied up or corroborated with the mythological tales to preach that the people pursuing their ancestral professions had been performing their god gifted obligations in which there is no scope for mental degeneration. This was in fact more a political compulsion than an imminent ideological commitment.

It cannot be denied that out of the said occupations, the oldest one relates to the utilization of wood in the process of evolution of the mankind. It was one of the oldest economic activity and primitive man could feel the warmth of home shelter and cooked food with the wood or timber derived from the natural outlets only. In the chronological sequence, first came the wood cutters (Kathurias), then 'Karga' as a distinguished community living on woodcutting as occupation in the division of Labour. While it cannot be surmised whether the Sutradhara community in its present form owed its origin from the traditional hereditary woodcutters, it is in fact that wood curving or crafts as a profession emerged in a much matured and advanced social stratification during the mediaeval ages. Wood as medium of art or decoration of architecture, on the other hand appears as a logical semblance of stone carving or rock cave architecture, as the same appeared as a more conducive or convenient material for handling due to its softness, flexibility or mobility. At different stages of artistic creativity, we can presume that earlier relief works or sculptures in the medium of wood were replicas of similar such executions in the medium of stone, which came much before the art practices in wood.

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Among the several occupations referred to in the Skandapuran as stated hereinbefore, the coppersmiths can be traced back at the earliest copper age, which can be estimated at around fourth millennium BC. Thereafter we can find the appearance of blacksmiths in the evolution of civilization. Nevertheless the new version of blacksmiths whom we find today are not the same who emerged in the per historic phase as indicated. The stone carvers as mentioned in the said excerpts in Skandapurana are presumably those appearing in the earliest historical phase and the swarnakaras or goldsmiths are found to be the latest in the sequence.

Even though at the earlier stage of Brahmanism in India, the said occupations were considered as works in the lower strata adopted by the castes, creeds or guilds which were avoidable by the Brahmans as per injunctions awarded by Bhavadev Bhatta in his scriptures on the sacrament of penance, we find mention of a very dignified artist who was at the helm of contemporary creative art practices named Raunak Shulpani belonging to Varendra Bhumi in Deopra Inscription of Vijaya Sen. It can be presumed based upon such inscription that a few of such artists might be occupying dignified official position in the royal court. But similar other instances are rare. The famous Buddhist monk Taranath had been citing the names of two distinguished artists Dhiman and his son Bitpal who developed tremendous skills in stone carving and metal casting mediums and also indicated that they were able to establish a generation of creative artists. It is interesting to note that the names and the identity of the artists have nowhere been mentioned in the official documents or records of the royal court despite there being significant efflorescence of art activities all around under royal patronage. Neverthless the stone carvers or metal processors incised their names sporadically on a few stone inscriptions or copper plates even sometimes referring to the names of their fathers and other predecessors and the circumstantial factors commonly lead us to presume the persons naming themselves as carvers or processors were in fact artists and sculptors engaged in the art activity. Dr Nihar Ranjan Ray in Bangalir Itihas has quoted the revelation of Silimpur inscription in this regard which entails the devotions or passion of the Magadh artist Someswar in inscribing the caligraphy, comparable with that of the intense affinity and passion of a lover portraying the image of his lady love. The recorded esteem and the glorification of the creative artist signifies that Someswar was not a mere caligrapher but an artist of a high order. Dr Ray further engrossed the names of artists from the contemporary epigraphic evidences from Bengal as under :

a. Tatat— son of Shubhat— the grandson of Bhogat.
b. Mankadas— son of Subhadas-resident of Samatat.
c. Bimaldas, Sutradhar Vishnubhadra.
e. Artist Mahidhar-son of Bikramaditya.
f. Artist Sashidev - Son of Mahidhar or Mahidhar Dev.
g. Artist Karnabhadra.
h. Artist Tathagatasar.
i. The great master and the supreme artist of Varendra-Raunak Sulpani-son of Brihaspati and grandson of Manadas.

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There is nothing on record to draw inference on the communal or racial identity to the artists from the said inadequate reference. The mere mention of the prefix Sutradhar against Vishnubhadra does not signify the sole racial or caste identification of the artist. The issue whether the Sutradhara community had its existence as a distinguished community involved in the artworks of ancient Bengal, therefore remains unresolved.

However during late mediaeval ages we can trace the distinctive reference of Sutradhar or Chhutar community in Mangala poems, Kabikankan Mukandaram in Chandimangala has clearly mentioned about the occupation of the art practices resorted to by the "Chhutors" in towns of the contemporary Bengal. A recent survey conducted by late Manik lal Singha on the Sutradhara community in the Rarh region of Bengal reveals the existence of the following sects or segments built up over a period of several centuries in the process of social as well as territorial stratification.

a. Bhaskara-engaged in sculptural works in the medium of stone.
b. Bardhamenya-engaged in hereditary wood crafts, but earned sound credentials in architecture, sculpture and painting belonging to a definite settlement.
c. Mandaranya- similar as Bardhamenya, but belonging to a different settlement.
d. Astakual or Atkulya— similar as Bardhamenya or Mandaranya, but belonging to a different settlement.
e. Khariperya— acquired hereditary skill and proficiency in temple, mosque and other architectural works and were very famous for such jobs.

The sutradhara community had surnames which are common to other castes or sects in Rarh region and are distinguished by the following characteristic features.

Surnames	Lineage	Taboo/totem.
Datta	Alisya	Prohibited to eat 'ARH' fish.
Chanda	Alisya	do
De	Alisya	do
Paul	Alisya	do
Seal	Alisya	do
Kundu	Sandilya	Prohibited to carry bent pole on shoulder or to touch the plough.
De	Sandilya	do
Mena	Kanak Rishi	Prohibited to pluck kanak-champa flower
Manna	Kanak Rishi	do
Maharana	Kanak Rishi	do
Rana	Kanak Rishi	do
Bhadra	Alisya	Prohibited to eat 'ARH' fish.
Rakshit	Alisya	do
Sutradhar	Alisya	do

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Surnames	Lineage	Taboo/totem.
Bhandari	Alisya	Prohibited to eat 'ARH' fish.
Fouzdar	Alisya	do
Rakshit	Kashyap	Prohibited to eat the meat of tortoise.
Das	Kanak Rishi	Prohibited to pluck kanak-champa flower
Kar	Kashyap	Prohibited to eat the meat of tortoise.
De	Kashyap	do
Datta	Kashyap	do
Sharma	Sandilya	Prohibited to take pineapple fruit.

We find from the available references the tremendous diversity in the occupational engagements of the Sutradhara community in Bengal and they appear to have excelled in each and every sphere of the art activity including woodcrafts, sculptures in different mediums, paintings, ivorycrafts, claymodelling and even processing or frying of paddy etc. They adopted or took over different occupations from other communities from time to time as means of their livelihood and there is no scope of doubt that they possessed uncommon merits or adoptability to match the changes in economic or social stratification. At the earlier stages, the 'Devala Brahmana' community in Rarh region engaged themselves in stone sculptures and 'Kumbhakara' community maintained exclusively the occupation of clay modelling and terracotta sculptures. The Sutradhar community in the process of diversification of their occupation salvaged the said occupations of Devala Brahmana and Kumbhakara communities effectively.

III. An account of the identification and habitation of the artists engaged in temple building art

From the numerous foundation inscriptions of the temples of the late mediaeval Bengal, we can have a broad idea of the communal as well as habitational status of the artists engaged in the great or profound heritage of building the architectural gems and creating a distinctive aesthetic status in terracotta ornamentation of such edifices, thereby identifying themselves beyond the relevant time and space. Extensive fieldworks in this regard have already been conducted by Amiya Kumar Bandopadhyay, Tarapada Santra, Sri Panchanan Roy and other distinguished researchers or scholars. I had also personally gone through certain inscriptive plaques on such temples at different places. Based upon the nature and circumstances of such inscriptive evidences, there exists scope to presume the following common factors.

a. During the earlier epoch of the temple construction activity in 17th and 18th century AD, no such inscriptive plaque contains the names of the architects or artists engaged or deployed for the construction activity. It therefore prevails that the donors or patrons were adherents of the rigid canons of religious practices.
b. The system of putting up the names of the architects or builders on the inscription plaques besides the names of the patrons or donors started mostly in the 19th century AD when there had been intensification of such activities, due to restructuring of the traditional patterns of ownership or patronization in an atmosphere of radicalization and contemplation

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of upward social mobility of the unrecognized sects, castes or class privileged in the process of a new social stratification.

c. The architects or builders in most of the cases mentioned their names only without specifying their place of habitation or places which are synonyms of their identity. It is further evident that they have in many places identified themselves as heirs or successors to their father who was a coveted artist apparently known to the social circle. It shows that such activity was socially recognized as distinct artistic achievement, which played a vital role in artistic creativity besides a mere economic expediency.

d. In several cases, however the architects or builders have clearly mentioned the names of their villages or places of settlement which are identifiable in the present geographical scenario. Based upon such descriptions we are able to locate the place where such habitation was built up in different districts of West Bengal. As already mentioned, the group or guild of architects or builders belonging to a specific settlement were mobile units implementing projects of temple building on turnkey basis in different districts having set up temporary camps. As such, we also find it convenient to pinpoint the certain specific instances where the artists belonging to one district engaged themselves in temple construction activities of the other districts.

e. From the antecedents of community identification it appears that the architects or builders hailed from the community of Sutradharas primarily although a very few sporadic intervention of Kumbhakara or Karmakara community is occasionally evident.

An interesting revelation in this regard is worthmentioning.

We find one name 'Gopinath Hari' of Dubrajpur inscribed on a terracotta band of the Nandipukur Siva Temple, Dubrajpur, as one who was associated with the construction of the temple.

Yet another much known instance in this context is available at Dhrmaraj Temple, Kavilaspur, Rajnagar, Birbhum where 'Mehatari' Sri Haridas was reported to be associated with the construction of the temple.

The participation of the people from the 'Hari' and 'Mehtar' communities which were avoidable sects as per apartheid norms, are rare exceptions in contemporary orthodox social parameters.

f. While listing out the names of the temple architects or builders as per inscriptional references, it is evident that one particular person or guild has been engaged in construction of more than one temple and in certain cases the number of such temples appear to have gone up to five to eight and that too in different places. It therefore persists that such persons acquired enormous fame in their works.

g. The construction activity of a temple unit was considered as a composite unit activity inclusive of all the technical as well as spiritual compliance and accomplishment of masonry activities including those relating to elevation, decoration or ornamentation. The temple doors were vital areas of execution where the artists also exhibited their exquisite skills in

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engraving, carving or sculpting their visions or ideas. Such wood carving was in fact the traditional activity of the Sutradhara community, which find successful execution in a number of late mediaeval temples some of which have been referred to in the chapter on contemporary art practices.

h. From the numerous references available it is well indicated that there was a gradual decline in the traditional flavour of the works with the corresponding changes in the cultural stratification arising out of the colonial influences of pseudo realism and also changes in the outlook of the patrons or donors in the phase of disintegration of the rural communes. The terracotta art practices started becoming subjects without interplay of the creative minds and the crude realism as well as lack of devotion or diligence in visionary apprehension of reality, gradually converted into mindlessly blank objects of materially oriented set up. This took place in the late 19th century AD, when the decline in terracotta art works were replaceed by stucco or terracotta-stucco mixed mediums with insignificant artistic merits. In the process the, the community of temple builders surviving on such occupation became disintegrated having occupational switchover or de-occupationalisation, thereby snapping the vital links of a great art tradition on the soils of Bengal by the end of the nineteenth century AD.

It is very difficult to catalogue all the names as well as antecedents of all the temple builders or architects in different districts of Bengal irrespective of their place of habitation or settlement as the volume would be difficult to handle with. It is therefore imperative to present systematically an indicative list of the artists according to their places of settlement or habitation along with the names of the temples and the actual or probable years of construction. This is being presented with a view to substantiate our said observations mentioned hereinbefore.

Settlement/Village	Name of Architect/ temple	The constructed temple	Year of temple construction
A. District of Hooghly			
Senhati (Jahanabad)	Mahindra Mistry.	Dadhipavanjiu Temple Krishnapur, Udaiganj, Kharar. Midnapore.	1877 AD
do	do	Burosiva Atchala Temple Raypara, Sasthitala, Kharar. Midnapore	1878 AD
Senhati (Jahanabad)	Mahindra Mistry.	Simhavahini Temple of Rai family at Krishnapur Udaiganj, Kharar, Midnapore	1877 AD

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Settlement/Village	Name of Architect/ temple	The constructed temple	Year of temple construction
Senhati (Jahanabad)	Kartick Chandra Mistry & Mahindra Nath Mistry	Sitaram Trayodasratna Temple of Maji family, Kharar. Midnapore	1864 AD.
do	Ganesh Chandra Kundu & Mahindra Nath Kundu	Atchala Siva Temple at Alui, Midnapore	1867 AD.
do	Sashi Bhusan Kundu Mistry	Rameshwar Jiu Temple Lakshakundu, Midnapore	1895 AD
do	Digambar De and his son Ram Kumar De	Kalyaneswar Siva Temple Chongghurali, Howrah	1884-85 AD
do	Son of Sri Digambar (Probably the said Digambar De)	Umapati Siva Temple, Ichhapur, Howrah	1867 AD
Ghoshpur– (Jahanabad)	Giridhar Mistry	Gopimohan Pancharatna Temple— Dehati, Midnapore	1848 AD
Khanakul	Gopal Mistry	Siva and Vishnu Temple,	19th CentAD
Madhusudanpur	Chhaku Paul	Charchala Siddheswara Siva Temple, Deuli Midnapore.	1720 AD.
Antpur	Ramgopal Mistry	Atchala & Sikhara Temples of Nandi family- Baruipur Howrah.	1841 AD
Rashpur	Rammohan	Bhavaniswar Devi Temple Mahishmuri, Howrah.	1839 AD
Mayal, Arambagh	Banamalidas Mistry	Buro Siva Temple, Rashpur Howrah	1870 AD
Rajhati, Nandanpur	Panchanan Mistry	Pareshnath Siva Temple Kalyanchak, Howrah.	1843 AD

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Settlement/Village	Name of Architect/ temple	The constructed temple	Year of temple construction
Rajhati, Nandanpur	Panchu Mistry (Probably the said Panchanan Mistry)	Sridharjiu Temple & Rameswar Siva Temple Pero, Howrah.	1846 AD
Pandua	Mistry Tanu	Two Temples at Birnagar Nadia.	Early 19th Cent AD.
Bingram	Rameshwar Mistry & Haladhar Bera	Sitaramjiu Temple, Asanda, Howrah	1769 AD
Thalia	Abhay Charan Mistry	Dharmaraj Temple, Kalikata, Howrah.	1797 AD
Keshabpur	Jagneswar Mistry	Barochala Temple, Deulpur Howrah	1878 AD.
Bankati (Badanganj)	Rammohan Mistry	Raghunath Temple, Kongarpur Kotulpur, Bankura.	1785 AD
B. District of Howrah			
Rautara	Ramprasad Chandra Mistry	Lakshmijanardan Navaratna Temple, Ganeshpur Howrah	1820 AD
do	do	Kali Temple, Kalyanpur Howrah	1822 AD.
Raichak	Mahesh Chandra Sen Sutradhar	Twin Temples at Chongghurali, Howrah	1885 AD
do	do	Kashinath Siva Temple, Devipur, Howrah	Late 19th Cent AD.
Khempur	Gokul Mistry	Sitala Temple, Khempur Howrah.	1893 AD.
District of Bankura			
Balsi	Narayan Mistry	Radhadamodar Temple, Bankadaha, Bishnupur	19thCent AD

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Settlement/Village	Name of Architect/ temple	The constructed temple	Year of temple construction
Bahulara	Iswari	Rdahakantajiu Temple Akui, Indas	19thCent AD
Bishnupur	Sanatan Mistry	Krishnarai Pancharatna Temple, Bagari Krishnagar, Midnapore	1855 AD
do	Sankardas Mistry	Dadhibamanjiu Temple, Deriapur, Midnapore	1882 AD
C. District of Midnapore			
P.S. Chandrakona :			
Ilambazar	Bhaktaramdas Mistry	Damodar Pancharatna Temple Anandapur, Midnapore	1869 AD.
Ilambazar	Bhaktaramdas Mistry (Jointly with Sriram Mistry)	Radhakrishna and Damodar Temple of Bag family, Anandapur Midnapore	1869 AD.
Khirpai	Haripada Das	Raghunath Temple Khirpai	1873 AD
Kashigunj	Haradhan Shaw	Sridhar & Gangadhar Temple of Ghosh family Hematpur, Midnapore	1896. AD
Ramjivanpur	Pelaram Sutradhar	Damodar Pancharatna Temple, Piripara, Ramjivanpur	1840 AD
P.S. Daspur:			
Nirmalbazar, Barada Kharar	Pancharam Mistry	Sitala Pancharatna Temple Uttar Dhankhal, Midnapore	1889 AD
Raghunathbari Pol or Polsar	Sriram Mistry (Jointly with Bhakta ramdasMistry)	Radhakrishna and Damodar Temple of Bag family, Anandapur Midnapore	1869 AD.
	Ramtarak Mistry	Navaratna Rashmancha of Ghosh family Krishnapur	1897 AD
do	Premchand Mistry	Taraknath Siva Temple, Khetrahat, Panskura. Midnapore	1879 AD

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Settlement/Village	Name of Architect/ temple	The constructed temple	Year of temple construction
Chetua, Daspur			
	Thakurdas Sil.	1. Radhaballavjiu Temple of Goswami family Talbandi, Midnapore.	1863 AD
		2. Siva Temple at Balarampore, Malikberh, Midnapore.	1856 AD
		3. Siva Temple at Chakbajit Midnapore.	1865-66AD
		4. Dadhibamanjiu Temple of Pal family, Daspur	1846 AD
		5. Tulshimancha at Hushnabazar, Daspur	1853 AD
		6. Pancharatna Sitala Temple at Suratpur, Midnapore	1849 AD.
	Thakurdas Sil Jointly with Gopal Chanda	7. Sridharjiu Navaratna Temple Chamka, Midnapore	1856 AD.
	Thakurdas Sil and Eight others	8. Sitaram Saptaratha and Sikhara Temples, Balarampore Manikberh, Midnapore	1861 AD.
do	Rampada De Mistry	Raghunath Temple of Jana family-Amodpur, Midnapore.	19th Cent Ad
do	Madhab Ch. Mistry	Dalan Temple of Ghorai family Ramchandrapur, Midnapore	1864 AD
Vill– Daspur	Gopal Chandra De	Navaratna Temple of Bhuiya Family at Puiyapat, Midnapore	1792 AD
do	Shiv Narayan De	Nilkantha Siva Temple at Sahachak Midnapore	19th CentAD
do	Gopal Chandra & Satrughna Mistry	Radhakrishna Panchratna Temple at Loada Bamunberh	1815 AD

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Settlement/Village	Name of Architect/ temple	The constructed temple	Year of temple construction
do	Lochan Chandra & Brindaban Chandra	Navaratna Temple at Loada Bamunberh, Midnapore	1820 AD
do	Kalachand Mistry	Sitala Temple at Rashpur Midnapore	1902 AD
do	Jadunath Sil	Sitala temple at Jotkeshab Midnapore	1902 AD
do	Brindaban Chandra	1. Radhakrishna Deul Temple at Loadabazar Midnapore	1843 AD
		2. Jhulan Temple & Radhgobinda Pancharatna Temple at Dakshin Maynadal, Midnapore	1848 AD
do	Ananda Mistry	1. Sikhara Siva Temple and Raghunath Rashmancha Chandramerh, Midnapore	1845 AD
		2. Dalan Temple of Bose family-Pingla, Midnapore	1855 AD
do	Haraharichandra Mistry	1. Simhavahini Natmandir, Paikpari, Midnapore	1821 AD
		2. Satyanarayan Navaratna Temple at Sarberia, Midnapore	1837 AD
		3. Gangadhar Siva Temple Paikpari, Midnapore	1828 AD
		4. Mahaprabhu Temple Brindabanpur, Midnapore	19th CentAD
do	Haridas Mistry	Radhakanta Pancharatna Temple at Uttarpara, Pingla, Midnapore	1859AD
do	Lodhan Sain	Dharma Temple Basudevpur, Midnapore	1859 AD
do	Baishnabdas Mistry	Sitalananda Deul Sripur, Midnapore	1862 AD

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Settlement/Village	Name of Architect/ temple	The constructed temple	Year of temple construction
Gobindanagar, Daspur	Ramcharan Mistry	Damodarjiu Temple, Nandanpur, Daspur Midnapore	1850 AD
Harirampore	Dulaldas Modak	Sambhunath Deul Suryanarayanpur Midnapore	1835-36
Kalmijore,	Rupchand Kundu	Sitala deul temple at Kalmijore, Midnapore	1879 AD.
do	Rajaramchandra Mistry	Gopinath Rashmancha at Hussainpore, Midnapore	1896 AD
do	Badanchandra Mistry	Dadhibaman Navaratna Rashmancha— Hare--krishnapore, Midnapore	1856 AD
do	Hari Mistry	Vaishnava Temples at Dakshin Maynadal Midnapore	1864 AD
do	Hiru Mistry & Balai Chandra Mistry	Gopinath Temple at Radhakantapur, Midnapore	1844 AD.
P.S. Midnapore:			
Pathra	Narayan Chhutar	Atchala Siva Temple at Berjanardanpur, Midnapore.	1784-87AD.
do	–do-alias, Narayan Karikar	Pancharatna Sitaram temple Berjanarndanpur, Midnapore	(Renovation)
P.S. Panskura :			
Rajhati	Dwarikanath Mistry	Sridhar Rashmancha of Bag Family at Lachhipur, Midnapore.	1879 AD
do	Udaichandra Pati Mistry	Taraknath Atchala Temple at Gobindapur, Midnapore	1881 AD

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Settlement/Village	Name of Architect/ temple	The constructed temple	Year of temple construction
Raghunathbari	Ram Mistry	Radhakrishna and Damodar Pancharatna Temple at Anandapur, Midnapore.	1869 AD
P.S. Garbeta :			
Neharpara	Haridas Datta	Rashmancha of Bose Family Amanpur, Midnapore	1834 AD
Vaital-	Premchand Mistry	Damodar Temple of Patra family at Meghula, Midnapore	1886 AD.
District of Birbhum :			
Vill— Saota	Brajanath Raj and Gopinath Raj	Durgadalan, Charkalgram	1859 AD.
Dubrajpore	Gopinath Hari	Siva Temple at Nandipukur Dubrajpore.	1889 AD.

There had been several names mentioned in such foundation inscriptions without specifying the places of their settlement, neverthless we can have an idea about the hereditary settlements which were built up in such places indicated hereinabove. Many such settlements were also reportedly built up in the district of Bardhaman at Guskara and Ketugram and several other places even in the district of Jessore and Rajshahi as per informations available, against which supporting evidences are yet to be available.

On the whole, the valuable tradition lies not only in the aesthetic judgment of the art and architecture of the late mediaeval Bengal Temples, but also on the wider social base of less known and hitherto discriminated masses on whom the entire premises was built up.

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CHAPTER VI

A REVIEW OF THE ART PRACTICES AND AESTHETIC EVALUATION

I. *Features of the contemporary art practices*

Mediums, forms and motifs

The faculty of art and its practices in the late mediaeval Bengal were enriched through the creative efforts of the collective minds of the masses staying at a distance of the institutional superstructure and by the persons who retained and developed the silent process of creativity in sublimity over a large space beyond the bonds of time. Art was a normal sensible behaviour within the routine norms of daily life of the people who did never distinguish it from the breathing profile of the individual existence. It was in fact established in the process that neither intense spirituality nor salvation of the soul instigated the desperation of the hereditary craftsmen to survive the beyond the lust for crude material gains.

As we have already noted, mediaeval society of the rural Bengal developed a cultural integration having synthesized the elements of divergent institutional trends and spiritual movements at the macro level. Islam despite being the religion of the conquerors remained as an ideology of the state power and monarchy, but a drastic cultural assimilation did not take place. The rural units survived in seclusion or isolation of the center of absolute political or spiritual authority. Organised feudalism with all the tenets of the copy book terms of the social transformation did not exist and the caste stratification, social bond, traditional economic ties of the peasants with the land etc. played vital roles in the attitudes of the individuals towards the social space of the art and artistic activity.

The art practices followed in the temple decorations of the late mediaeval Bengal are so elaborate and diverse that it is extremely difficult to bring the same in analogical or schematic terms or categories depending upon the styles forms, motifs and disciplines. However certain common traits are evident which are primarily age wise or area wise revealing thereby that the guilds of artists or craftsmen developed in their own settlements, forms and motifs identified to be belonging to them and conducted innovative experiments to their works as and when opportunities became available to them.

The basic elements of the art practices remaining embedded in the natural, ethnographical and traditional attributes of the soil, it is worth mentioning that due to a phase of economic contraction that Bengal was passing through in the mediaeval ages, there had been no massive

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or monumental structures of high aesthetic merit, which may be treated as of great significance in the civilization of the mankind. Evidences of the use of stone as medium of sculpture though found prevalent in the ancient Bengal, had a gradual decline in the mediaeval times perhaps due to difficult proximity factors of the sources or factors of austerity of the economically weaker patrons. Hence the cheaper or available mediums which had traditional roots on the soil prevailed upon the art practices more or more, which in the phase of culmination exhibited tremendous potential of aesthetic creativity. The formative epoch of the spread of time in the distinct historical phase of art in Bengal in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century AD had been reflecting certain disparities or disorganizations in the architectural features and sculptures and sculptural programmes, which had the delicacy of touch and indications of grace through meticulous and mindful applications of the Artists' or craftsmen's higher creative imaginations in the phase of transition in the seventeenth century AD.

Temples are generally conceptualized with deep passions, sentiments and devotions not only to the enshrined deity but also as a sacred social activity to achieve a positive social mobility in the social stratification in the rural Bengal. The temples which arose as a spatial concept in the architect's imagination in the ancient Bengal, laid least emphasis on this aspect in the late mediaeval Bengal. The architects did not pay adequate attention to the treatment of the interior space and to the embellishments of the interior in general but showed extreme devotion and diligence to put up show of the intense creativity in every aspect of the exterior decoration rendering the exquisite appearance of the same turning into architectural gems beyond the sequence of time and space. The reason may lie in the specific nature of the contemporary religious rituals and also due to the fact that except on special occassions like religious festivals, the different cults of the contemporary Hindu religion did not favour congregational worship requiring lingered stay of the devotees at any specific time. The created atmosphere of the interior enabled the devotees to enter into the dim coolness of the interiors of the shrine with mysterious depths within the sacred image of worship visible generally by the flickering light of the numerous oil lamps.

The use of the different mediums of the late mediaeval temple art besides the devastating application of terracotta, which is the prime issue for consideration of the work may be indicated as under:

(a) Embellishments of stone relief works on brick or laterite temples :

i) Vishnu temple of the Halder family-Kotulpur, Bankura -18th Cent, AD.
ii) Radhadamodar Temple at Sonatorapara, Seuri, Birbhum— 18th Cent AD.
iii) Five Charchala Siva Temples at Ganpur (Mallarpur), Birbhum— 1769 AD.
iv) Fourteen Char chala Siva temples and Dolmancha at Ganpur (Mallarpur), just opposite of the cluster of temples mentioned in point (iii) above -1767 to 1769 AD.
v) Tewenty four Charchala and Atchala Siva Temples at Battala, Majherpara, Mallarpur, Birbhum, 18th Century AD.
vi) Entry gate of Kali Temple, Tarapith, Birbhum-18th Century AD.

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(b) Embellishments of terracotta decoration on laterite temples structures :

There are instances also where terracotta plaques or stucco reliefs in the alternative have been placed for ornamentation on the surface of laterite structures of the temples as matter of practice in order to provide the shrines a visual balance and softer look. The practice was however adopted at the stage of decadence of the terracotta art practices in Bengal.

A few of such temples with such practices adopted located at Patrasayer, Dt. Bankura, may be mentioned as under :

i) Pancharath Deul Siva Temple of Ghosal family at Ghosalpara, Patrasayer— early 19th Cent. AD.
ii) Ram Raghubir Temple at Ghosalpara, Patrasayer early 19th Cent AD.
iii) Sridhara Temple of Ghosal family at Ghosalpara, Patrasayer 19th Cent AD.

(c) Mixed medium of terracotta and stone relief decoration :

Instances are also existing where the surface ornamentation medium is maneuvred with the simultaneous use of soft green stone reliefs and terracotta plaques on the same temple. This is however an uncommon practice sparingly adopted in the late mediaeval Bengal.

Example of this category, is 'Gopal Temple' at Nabagram, Ghatal, Dt Midnapore, reported to be constructed in 1709 AD.

(d) Paintings as a medium of temple decoration :

Two dimensional paintings of different mythological depictions in the local idioms are seen in the treatment of interior walls of a few late mediaeval temples of Bengal. The interior space covering walls, ceilings, pillars, arches etc are embellished with paintings with the use of natural colours in the traditional school of pata painting showing the lines, tones, forms and rythmn on the surface featuring the themes ornamented with scrolls and foliage designs.

A few of such temples falling in this category may be indicated as under :

a) Brindabanchandra Temple at Guptipara, Dt. Hooghly- 18th Cent AD.
b) Shyamsundar Dalan Temple at Baharu, South 24 Parganas-late 18th Cent or early 19th Cent AD.
c) Pancharatna Temple of De family— Rautkhand, Bankura 18th Cent AD.
d) Jagannath Temple at Comilla-Bangladesh- 18th Cent AD.

(e) Wood carving as a medium of temple decoration :

Bas relief or high relief sculpturing, carving or engraving panels of wood and crafting of plastic art was a traditional and hereditary vocation of the Sutradhara community in Bengal which adopted and excelled in all faculties of art practices establishing their clear identity as forerunner community of artists or craftsmen. The medium in general was the most popular one spread over each and every aspect of life having divergent use ranging from routine utility to deification of mythological images. Adequate availability and convenience in processing have rendered the

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medium of wood to become accessible to all sections of the people in the economic stratification. The proper selection of wood, skills in incision and engraving and use of varieties of incising tools, chisels and engravers etc, had their own peculiarities or local versions of the soil which were carried forward from generation to generation of craftsmen, the residues of which can even be traced out today.

There are two types of practices adopted for temple construction or decoration through the medium of in late mediaeval Bengal;

i) Installation of Mandapas including Chandi Mandapas which were generally located in close proximity of the enshrined deity or the house of local elites. The Mandapas were total wooden structures including beams, brackets, joints, angles, shafts, channels and other architectural elements covered with thatched cottage sheds of straws in the conventional patterns of Do-chala, Char chala or At-chala in keeping with roofing practices of the rural Bengal cottages. The Mandapas including the beams, brackets, joints, angles and shafts were schematically and gracefully carved with sculptural patterns in the vertical or horizontal axis with the motifs of the various deities, mythological scenes, animal, vegetal, floral or geometrical, motifs and patterns revealing the extreme sense of decency and aesthetic beauty. These Mandapas in fact are significant additions to the art heritage of Bengal, some of which are cited hereunder :

a) Chandimandapa of Mitra family at Antpur (P. S. Jangipara), Dt Hooghly. The Mandapa is reportedly constructed in 1683-84 AD.
b) Chandimandapa of Mitra Mustafi family at Sripur, Balagarh, Dt Hooghly also reported to be constructed in the late 17th Century AD.
c) Chandimadapa of Mitra Mustafi family (since abolished) at Ula Birnagar, Dt, Nadia stated to be constructed in 1684 AD.
d) Chandimandapa of Sinha Ray family at Nakashipara, Dt. Nadia stated to be constructed in 18th Cent AD.
e) Chandimandapa of Halder family at Maheshpur (Mandirbazar), South 24 Parganas (Partially dilapidated) also stated to be constructed in the 17th Century AD.
f) Four Chandimandapas at village Biharjuri (P.S. Gangajalghati), Bankura since abolished, the instances of the woodcarving works presently can be seen at Ashutosh Meseum, Kolkata.
g) Atchala Mandapa at Bhelaidiha, (P.S. Simlipal), Bankura-reported to be constructed in the 18th Cent AD.
h) Chandimandapa at Village-Satmauli (P.S. Taldangra), Bankura reported to be constructed in late 19th Century AD.
i) Chandimandapa at Village-Madaribari (P.S Onda), Bankura reported to be constructed in late 19th Century AD.
j) Chandimandapa at Village-Ramgarh (P.S. Binpur), Midnapore reported to be profusely ornamented, now abolished.

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k) Chandimandapa at Village Jara (P.S. Chandrakona), Midnapore, reported to be constructed in late 19th Cent AD.

l) Chandimandapa at Village Beucha (P.S. Salbani), Midnapore, reported to be constructed in late 19th Cent AD.

ii) Elaborate carving of the wooden doors of the temples forming part of the temple decoration as a whole was done mostly by the same guild of craftsmen engaged in construction and terracotta or other mode of ornamentation of the temples in late mediaeval Bengal. The panels of various mythological depictions neatly carved out in bas relief or high relief revealed artistic or aesthetic merit of the of edifices— the appearance of which at the entrance door gravitated upon the devotional sentiments of the viewers.

Instances of such woodcarvings appearing on the entry doors are numerous and it is difficult to list out the representative specimens of the nature within the permitted space. However for the sake of simple illustration, I would quote hereunder some of such temples which have been personally visited by me in the recent past.

a) Radhdamodar Pancharatna temple of Adhikary family at Purbagopalpur (Panskura), Midnapore. early 19th Cent AD.
b) Sridharjiu Pancharatna Temple of Bhuiya family at Kotalpur (Daspur), Dt. Midnapore 1813 AD.
c) Lakshmi Janardan Temple of Pal family at Daspur, Midnapore, early 19th Cent AD.
d) Lakshmi Narayan Temple at Munkuripara, Balsi, Bankura. 1652AD.
e) Gopinath Temple at Dharmadaha, Nakashipara, Nadia. 18th Cent AD.
f) Lakshmijanardan Temple of Chhaule and Adak family— Baradabarh, Howrah, 19th Cent AD
g) Sitaram Temple of Ghosh family at Padampat, Keshpur, Midnapore. 1829 AD.
h) Temple of Chowdhury family at Gayenpara, Khirpai, Midnapore— 19th Cent AD.
i) Sridharjiu temple at Natuk Jaikrishnapur, Ghatal, Midnapore 19th Cent AD.
j) Lakshmivaraha Temple at Chakkalandi, Kharagpur, Midnapore. 19th Cent AD.
k) Gopinath Temple at Dasghara, Dhaniakhali, Hooghly 19th Cent AD.
l) Lakshmi Janardan Temple at Dubrajpur, Sabang, Midnapore— 19th Cent AD.
m) Temple of Samanta family, Sridharpur, Daspur, Midnapore, 1893 AD
n) Laxmi Janardan Temple of Bhuiya family at uttar Dhankhal, Daspur, Midnapore, 19th cent AD.

The unusual concentration of such temples with engraved wooden doors has been evident in the district of Midnapore where the numbers would be touching even about a hundred, with sporadic instances spread over the other districts as well. There are circumstances to believe that the distinctly spectacular practice of craft by the Sutradhara community found its one of the main avenues in the temple embellishments.

f) Terracotta- stucco as mixed medium of decoration:

At the stage of decadence of visual qualities in the terracotta art practices due to various socio economic factors and the qualitative change taken place in the perceptions due to colonial

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cultural synthesis, the crude practice of lime sand plastering popularly known as Pankha or Stucco started prevailing in the temple embellishments as a mixed medium with the terracotta or as an independent medium. The degeneration is evident in the late 19th Century AD, when a distinct change in the form and motif took place due to the gradual disintegration of the hereditary craftsmanship of the craft guilds and migration of urban cultural traits in an atmosphere of new social stratification.

The phenomenon is further corroborated by the change in perceptions of the new sets of promoters or donors of the temples who did not have much of regard and sentiment to the elements of clarity, sophistication and refinement embedded in the tradition of the great artistic achievement which took place in the 17th and 18th cent AD. There had been also a gradual diversion of the expediencies of the craftsmen to the new sets of priorities and perceptions for the sake of their survival. The transition was felt convenient as the medium of stucco needed less devotion and diligence and was economic though less durable.

The gradual disappearance of the terracotta is first evident in use of the mixed medium and stucco sharing greater and greater space in the outer walls ultimately led the terracotta embellishments to disappear finally from the scenario.

The number of temples in this category is even more than a thousand spread over the different districts of Bengal. To start with, stucco was used in greater numbers on the Rashmanchas, Dolmanchas or other subsidiary shrines, but the trend ultimately grabbed the principal shrines partly and finally as a whole. Since the practice did not have much of artistic or aesthetic merit, it is not deemed relevant to cite the hundreds of edifices to substantiate the proposition.

B. Methods and techniques.

The different modes of ornamentation of the temples in late mediaeval Bengal were dominated by the placement or fixation of various decorative elements with distinguishing characteristics within the overall architectural expediencies so as to meet the requirements of balance in composition, norms and practices as per spiritual prescriptions and also the innovative contemplations of the craftsmen or artists. Bengal being the homeland of strong traditions of brick built architecture as evident in the huge monasterial, temple or mosque/mausoleum complexes of the ancient and proto mediaeval ages as already elaborated hereinbefore, had the inherited resources of indigenously developed technology of architecture which was implemented in different contextual variations with suitable revisions, improvisations and modifications in the extensive architectural culture of the late mediaeval times.

Putting up or fixation of terracotta sculptures, plaques and panels as decorative elements in structured niches or manipulated spaces on the walls was an age old practice in Bengal which took yet another form in miniaturized shrines or edifices belonging to the late mediaeval ages depending upon the parameters of time and space. The stupendous or massive character of the monuments as a standard of visual perception or parameter of aesthetic judgment lost its relevance and the mystic or rhythmic literary overtone in visual craft occupied the space with greater spread in the miniature temples enshrining the beloved divinity of the people in Bengal in the contemporary

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period. The elements of terracotta ornamentation applied on the surface of the exteriors and interiors of the late mediaeval temples may by classified as under:

a) Profiles of plaques and tiles with variations in size and depth according to the volume and space provided by the cardinal niches.

b) Running panels were constructed primarily for putting up larger compositions on broad spaces covering sometimes even an area of six to nine sq. fts above the door lintels of the entrance or in the same position above the false or artifical doors on the three other sides or front Rahas. The panels were comprising of a number of separate tiles arranged in chronological sequence in keeping with the design contemplated to be portrayed on the walls.

c) Pre shaped or designed bricks were also placed at the time of brick laying itself for projecting the niches, angles, vertical or horizontal divisions, corners, butteresses according to the need of the architectural elevations.

d) Large sized terracotta sculptures were manufactured either for placement at the artificial or false doors on different sides of the sanctum right from the early phase of the era and/or for independent placement as door keepers or musicians to show them welcoming the devotees or viewers particularly for Rashmanchas or Dolmanchas at the later stage of the development of terracotta art and architecture.

From the nature and circumstances of the constructions as are evident even today in the large number of temples and based upon the informations available from the surviving lineage of the hereditary craftsmen, we are able to derive an idea of the methods deployed in creation or implementation of the process of terracotta ornamentation, which are indicated in brief as under.

a) The quality of the clay available in the subcontinent is soft, sticky and swampy with compact texture and consistency. But due to ill drainage and accumulation of sodium salt, sterility is developed. It is further observed that the clay loam is compact, cloddy and alkaline. Hence some prior treatment is necessary to make the same flexible, smooth, responsive and durable through removal or addition of other natural and organic materials.

b) As we know, one of the earliest skills developed by man was in the handling of clay. The soft alluvial clay was kneaded and coiled and the lumps were modelled or with or without applique or decorative patterns and designs. Use of wheel for throwing off pots, vessels and images also had been in use since the ancient days. Hence the craftsmanship has been natural or perennial, in which there had been enough scopes of creativity and fascination which grips both the creator and onlooker.

c) It is evident that the basements of the temples were deeply embedded in the soil even upto 9 to 10 fts with a view to carry the enormous load of the massive walls with average thickness of around 20 to 35 inches and solid roofing structures. The basements in many cases have been constructed with the use of laterite stones, whereas the walls were constructed mostly through laying of bricks or stone slabs with the mortar of a

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lime compound, the surface of which was left for coating or covered by the terracotta plaques, panels or tiles.

d) The elutriation of clay, removal of the non conducive materials, process of desalination and finally forging elasticity to the desired extent to enable the paste becoming responsive to the fingers have been discussed in details in my first work on the art of ancient terracottas of Bengal. I do not feel any need for repetition of the facts here.

e) The preparation of the Kiln or baking oven has its indigenous origin and the practice had been different in different parts of the country. The arrangement of sun baked objects within the kiln, covering of spaces intervening the objects through the use of rice bran, dry leaves, woods and other inflammable products with the end to ensure even distribution and necessary duration of fire was a highly sensitive methodology acquired by the artisans in their hereditary vocations.

f) The drying up of the objects in the sunshine and baking of the same in the Kilns, regulation of the temperature within a range of 900' degree cent to 950 degree cent as wells as admeasuring the time span factor and absorbing capacity of the objects proposed to be produced are also very sensitive areas requiring specialized skills of the craftsmen. Due to the extent of precision and delicacy of the surface of the decorative plaques, the craftsmen were required to ensure meticulous or scruplous adherence of the norms and procedures.

g) In keeping with the size of the plaques or tiles, common formats manufactured of the wood of common depth were in use, as evident. The wooden cases or formats were available with the craftsmen and were utilized depending upon the needs of the proposed decoration.

h) The lump of the processed clay with the extent of desired elasticity enabling the paste to be responsive to the finger press or moulds, incising instruments or tools, was kept ready for placement in the formats for manufacturing of the plaques itemwise as contemplated by the designer or architect conceptualising the elevation of the sanctum.

i) After the processed clay mass is placed in the format, the open portion of the format was modelled or carved. The desired image or composition was commonly placed at the center surrounded by supporting designs or bands. The method of modelling, or applique or modelling cum applique was generally followed in sculpting the images manually on the surface.

j) The use of mould is however evident in potraying the facial appearance of the images and also certain common portions of the figures or ornamentation or repetitive nature. This is evident from the faces which are full front or semi profile and the similarities in the repetitive action or movements of the images commonly found on the terracotta plaques.

Moreover we have further observed that certain common stock of images have been repeated in a group of temples probably constructed by the same guild of the craftsmen. For example a few plaques of erotic images, scene of feeding the deer by a woman

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and a few small plaques representing local deities of the same motif, size and dimension have been repeated among the temples of Jhikhira, Howrah and also among certain temples in Daspur-Panskura-Ghatal area of Midnapore. The repetition suggests that moulds were also in use for production of a part of the stock images in the temple decoration.

k) In the case of large group of sculptures forming panels to be placed on the prime locations of the temples including facade as well as its entablature and projections, larger wooden formats with common depths as applicable for other smaller plaques were in use. The conceived images in the composition as a whole are thereafter modelled, sculpted or incised on the open surface of the processed clay masses placed in the format. The finished wet surface are thereafter minutely divided or split up in a number of convenient pieces, before the clay became dry. A sequence in number was placed on the back for identification which facilitated laying of the segments at the appropriate place in the permitted space of the temple after the final process.

l) Glazing of surface of the terracotta objects in its traditional connotation was not resorted to on the plaques or panels either at the pre baking or post baking stage. However it could be gathered from the surviving lineage of the craftsmen that some surface treatment of the plaques was done at the pre baking stage with the use of a special type of liquid compound reportedly manufactured through the extracts of some plant seeds, which is presently unknown.

m) Large sized full fledged terracotta solid sculptures were reported to be modelled out of solid clay masses and to facilitate handling of such figures as well as burning or baking, the same was manufactured in different compatible parts, which were assembled together at the post burning stage of installation.

In brief the mature planning of the whole structure, the proportionate distribution of the parts, the graceful carving of the roofing structures and the elegant architectural and plastic decorations together with their impressive dimensions have rendered the temples becoming meaningful creations representing time beyond the bonds of time.

C. The Sculptural arrangements :

The arrangements of decoration of the sculptural plaques, panels and models on the late mediaeval brick temples of Bengal had some common denominator with variations in the spread, space and means or priorities of the donor/promoter. Nevertheless the common practice of putting up decorative embellishments at different locations on the surface space may be indicated as under.

a) Lintels over the entrance door space or the central vertical segment on the front wall. containing the prime mythological or popular themes.

b) Recesses in the upper registers of the walls stylized sometime as curvilinear ribs below the shrine tower or as plain vertical recesses in chronological order— containing the incarnation images, images of mythological or divine tales or satirical depictions of the contemporary social order, etc.

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c) Recesses in the middle registers including those on the shrine pillars generally embellished with graceful figures carving religious, social and political depictions with devotional, emotional or satirical significance on the panels which were altogether novel credal innovations.

d) Recesses in the lower registers— containing elaborate mix of mythological and social depictions evidencing the socio-economic conditions of the land and its people. The depictions include naval culture, lavish or luxuriant pleasure of the elites including their habits or vocations, war or the cavalry march, erotic habits, entertainments etc and the space provided the craftsmen or artists to display their immense creativity induced by the spontaneous pleasure, beyond the canonical norms.

e) The medium bands and the cornice are richly carved with mouldings of the same range of supplementary or subsidiary depictions besides the objects surrounding the enshrined deities.

f) The corner buttresses of the spire of the temples have developed a novel form with the applications of different decorative motifs supporting the overall architecture of the temple.

g) The Cardinal niches commonly filled up with divine images which did not essentially relate to the enshrined deity at all times. The puranic or folk legends associated or unassociated with the niche figure are also sometimes indicated by the small cameos in a synoptic manner on the jambs.

h) The arches and pilasters are also embellished with decorative scrolls with the curves of which are placed dancing or other secular or entertainment motifs. Sometimes the figures of the Yaksha, Yakshi or other fancy images are placed leaning against the stylized arches or brackets.

i) The surface spaces have been in general variegated by bold mouldings and offset projections and studded with an intricate wealth of decorative ornaments inter spread with figure sculptures.

j) In certain cases the battered wall has a variegated texture enlivened by sculptural or ornamental profusion.

k) In certain other cases also, we find that the podium mouldings are simple and bold but include a receded frieze of sculptures representing gods or goodesses in niches surmounted by richly carved scrolls.

l) In certain cases it is also found that the remarkably sculptured columns in the vertical directions with offset projections on the pillared facade at the corners are carrying monolithic figure sculptures or rearing horses with warrior riders and routine and other animal figures on the hunt.

In the miniature reliefs or full scale facades, the artists also started putting up carved out three dimensional monolithic forms. The monoliths were taken to different degrees of finish. The craftsmen or the artists not only faithfully reproduced various forms in general but also the individual parts in minutest details of terracotta works and decorative designs appropriate to various forms.

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II. *Contextualisation of the contemporary art and society*

The intensive and elaborate art practices evident in a series of references on the congnitive actions and aesthetic generalizations associated with the architectural patterns as well as sculptural decorations of the late mediaeval temples of Bengal evoked serious interests among the researchers, scholars, historians and sociologists since the early twentieth century. Not merely as a field of study or investigation, the large corpus of aesthetic images emerged as the field of admiration, appreciation, passion and sentiments in commensurate with the actual polysemy in a concrete historical context. Several works in the field were published recording the origin, architectural variations, divergent depictions by eminent researchers including David Mc cutchion, Satish Chandra Mitra, Sudhir Kumar Mitra, Amiya Kumar Bandopadhyay, Manik Lal Sinha, Hitesh Ranjan Sanyal, Tarapada Santra, Mohit Roy and many others. . Many of such works are of outstanding merit and are significant additions to the art history of Bengal. The extensive field work done, materials documented are of immense value not only in the historical perspective but also for bringing a sense of awareness among the common people with regard to the great treasury of art they inherited, but with little knowledge.

The breadth and dimensions of the artistic achievements pertaining to pre historic and ancient Bengal recorded so far in chronological sequence stretched upto the Paharpur, Maynamati and Jagjivanpur discoveries related to periods till 12th/13th century AD, are quite significant and amazing. The scholastic as well as analytical studies and reports contributed by Indian historians including R.D. Banerjee, K. N. Dikshit, S. K. Saraswati, D. C. Sarkar, B. N. Mukherjee, Nihar Ranjan Roy, B. Bhattacharya, K. G. Goswami, S. R. Das, P. C. Dasgupta and many other distinguished personalities in the field supported by the patriotic local historians, are remarkable invoking a sense of pride among us about the tremendous resources of intellectuality underlying our rich heritage.

Terracotta as a medium of art and architecture occupied the central position in any discussion on the tradition of our soil and had been a prime source of history. It was commonly used as spatial art, which sometimes included temporal elements. The immense treasury of artistic images available from Chandraketugarh, Tamluk, Bangarh, Atghara, Harinarayanpur and various other places in the lower deltatic Bengal pertaining to a period of about 500 years on or around the beginning of the first Millenium of the Christian era evidences lumiously purposive depictions in which all elements of the visual world were appropriately disposed. The sensuously beautiful , but inadequately plastic representations were too communicative reflecting ideal and unified elaborations of human gesture, pose, costumes, countenance and characters which were opened for delineation. These were self sufficient glimpses of social life in which the elements of divinity occupied their own spheres. The rich aesthetic experience signified positive unity of time and space. The genre, the representations of a group of people apparently united by a common interest and placed in the apropriate background, had the unfailing legitimacy.

The concrete and definite emotions composed with expressive purposes and the ornamental power of the art representing the said time stimulated further elaborations and expressive

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dimensions in the Pala era and the later periods till the 12th and 13th Century AD, which are evident in Paharpur, Maynamati and Jagjivanpur monasterial decorations. The sheer rhythm and quality of the execution are the outcome of a definite attitude of the organism which was correlated to the feeling. There had been a variety of significant expressions, which are found to be extremely harmonious and balanced with the dynamic movement quality. The era is therefore identified as the apex of the Bengal school of art.

Interestingly enough, the art during the era reveals a deep penetration of the non institutional folk elements of art in the institution officially patronised by the monarchy. This would have been made possible because of the spiritual radicalism adopted by the rulers as a matter of policy and the necessity for a social balance in the era of high expectations. Nevertheless the profuse imageries inherent in the age old folk cultural resources enriched and developed the quality of art and its language.

The Islamic art of the mediaeval Bengal represents a drastic change in the traditional perceptions in so far as the rulers interdiction of the living forms of the art is concerned. The institution of art emerged was a clear synthesis of the invading Central Asian trends and the local non figurative language of vegetal and floral motifs. The forces of negation in the era of transition were exposed to acute contradictions entailing a decline of the institution of the past non Islamic traditions with all its costs and consequences, but the folk elements of art staying in isolation from all political or spiritual upheavals survived, but subdued with all forces of dogmatism dominating the show during the period of switchover of the spiritual authority. Terracotta as a medium of art had all along been true to the nature for its directness and simplicity of forms and their adaptation in use for architectural edifices did not lose relevance even in Islamic architecture in the 15th to 17th century AD when we find efflorescence of non figurative or non representative decorations on the mosques and mausoleums constructed in transliteration of the language of Persian or Central Asian architecture. The issues of assimilation of the incoming trends with the local elements or characteristics have already been discussed earlier, but there is still a scope to reiterate that the non institutional folk traits mostly prevailed in the decoration of the Islamic architectural monuments of Bengal in the changed economic and political scenario.

The lost institution of pre Islamic era did not revive, but the achievement of the artifice relating to the said period revived in a different contextual reality of the Late mediaeval Bengal. The common charms of the elaborate and profuse sculptural ornamentation of the late mediaeval temples are the simplicity of the shapes, the spontaneity, directness and properiety and the perfect symmetry and purity of the forms. The correlation of the sculptural forms and decorative ornamentations is so perfect that without seeming pre meditation, the works rather may be construed as creations of nature than of art. These are very common attributes of the folk art traditions which found diverse applications in the temple art of the epoch. Neverthless the profusion of the ornamentation did never detract the art from its dignity or comeliness and the delicacy of surface was enhanced by complete exposition of gracefulness of configuration, expressiveness of lines and modes of harmony. The distinguishing features of the folk art have

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clear affinities with the artistic generalizations of the representations exposed through the temple art.

The prevalence of the institution as the guardian of the socio cultural balance and equalities in the historical perspective was exposed to the alienation from the common masses, who had their own set of beliefs and practices since primordial stage in the circumference of settlements situated at a distance of the centers of political power. The geographical and territorial isolation also caused well founded distance between two poles of the society, which the social scientists generally define as folk sophisticate polarity. The social organization of both the poles had been manifesting different sets of contradictions emanated out of animate or inanimate inter personal or intra personal and social relationship between different individuals or groups. Direct human relationship, spiritual contacts as well as deep foundation of the souls featured as the qualities of such folk stratification, which nevertheless were also at the same time endowed with limited sphere of minds of the individuals and extreme scarcity of the physical and mental resources. In this context, the observations of A.L.Krober appears to be relevant.

"The relatively small range of their cultural content, the close knitness of the participation in it, the very limitation of scope, all make for a sharpness of the patterns in the culture, which are well characterized, consistent and interrelated. Narrowness, depth and intensity are the qualities of folk culture" (A.L. Krober 'Anthropology' London, 1948)

It is however pertinent to mention that all the aforesaid features despite being ideal typical conceptions of rural society even applicable to the late mediaeval Bengal, there had been emergence of socially constructed cultural types in which efflorescence of various cultural traits in isolated groups became a perennial trend all the time. The groups were identified by castes, clans, tribes and religions, which were characterized and controlled informally by sacred values. Kinship relations predominated and the culture was mostly transmitted orally. In such social stratification, the moral order was treated as paramount. Consequent thereupon, the society was relatively static which developed indigenously with its own resources. In a sharp contrast of the features, its polar opposite urban society existed in different political and administrative criteria. The urban societies were created as a break of the society's natural situation. Here the kinship was less important and the relationships were of instrumental, transitory and superficial character. The settlements were characterized by size, density and heterogeneity which in combination provided the basis for a complex division of labour.

The folkways— the everyday customs of a social group or community, which were less strongly sanctioned and less abstractly organized, provided the basis for spiritual diversities in the rural settlements, which had surprising sense of cohesion among different sects and community beliefs. Art was conceived as a natural process which by no means was identified as a sphere of activity separated from the everyday customs of the individuals. There was no ambiguity in concepts and all the producation relations which were predetermined by castes did not evoke antagonistic bias within the social groups in isolated rural settlements. There was a segmentary structure strongly dominated by collective consciousness and the division or subdivision of work

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tasks, hierarchies of skill and a structure of power and authority were based upon the principle of comparative advantage. The realm of necessity is however evident, but the same was never dominated by alienation or regulated by any contract. The interdependence within the differentiated structure was contributory to the overall organic solidarity in as much as the hereditary craftsmen or farmers had a defined and distinct role in the society which provided a clear status of such occupation within the society. In certain cases of the community rituals and customs, they had been considered indispensable and were dignified for their productive tasks. To be in particular about the art of terracotta or pottery there had been immense demand of the traditional products because of the fact that the social norms provided a religious prejudice against retention of the worshipped images or using earthly vessels twice, etc, and thus the potter or craftsmen were hereditary officers in any Bengali village.

Despite their poor and humble economic status we cannot overlook the serenity and dignity of the lives of the Bengali craftsmen, who had their assured places inherited from father to son for a hundred generations in the state organization. Nature provided them with everything to their hands and they needed very little food and less clothing and simple tools of the trade. The village landlords were generally co operative and the craftsmen used to meet up their subsistence requirements against their labour contributions towards the tra de union village corporations of which they had been indispensable and essential members. They had been relieved from incalculable dead weight of material demands and the families as a whole used to give to their works total cares, considered works as routine ritual functions. Their contentment of mind and leisure and pride and pleasure in works were for their own sake, which in turn became contributory factor for artistic excellence achieved during the era.

The urban settlements became the centers of political and economic power characterized by high level of migration, social heterogeneity dominated by the status groups or consumption classes whose interests were tied up with the institutions of power and commerce. The forms of social inequality, contradictions between the individual and collective provided exploit space for the political institutions or created conditions for invaders to launch aggression. The urban settlements were considered as the locus of civilization, refinement, culture and institutional art practices in contrast of the rural settlements which were home of truth and of sharing of knowable communities united by common values. The rural-urban dichotomy had all along been dichotomy of two different socio cultural systems one of which was susceptible to the drastic upheavals in the institution of power and the other remaining secluded itself from the political turbulence in its own state of isolation affected ultimately only by the external consequence at the later stage.

The folk society existed in their sharp contrast polar opposite urban societies and societies in the greater concept were conceived as lying on continuum between the two. The conception rather than a simple contrast between the rural and urban communities, also extended to denote gradation of types of community in terms of their size, density of population, extent of division of labour, isolation, sense of community solidarity, rates of social change etc. Such contrast varied greatly between societies and at different times. The rural communities in mediaeval Bengal never

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existed in close relation with the urban settlements and urban values were rarely permeated to the rural communities. The cultural traits of the two poles are also distinguishable by virtue of their focus on the art objects and practices rather than the structural expositions. There is also the tendency to stress on the material basis of the culture at both the poles though ideational senses of culture were very important and were represented in cognitive and symbolic anthropology.

The wealth in the form of knowledge or ideas in the urban areas were considered to legitimize the maintenance of status and power, which were allowed blanket support of the royalty or the institution of imperial political power. The dominant had its symbols like language, culture and artefacts through which they could establish their hegemony. The success of the institutional mechanism was largely dictated by the extent to which the individuals absorbed the dominant culture and by how much the cultural capital was shared by the dominant group, thus ideologically legitimating the then social order. The urban culture however had the inherent contradictions between the political as well as social equalities and the individual self expression as well as headonistic fulfillment of the artisans or craftsmen. There had been many occasions in the history of Bengal when there had been failure of social institutions which were due to problems and conflicts arising out of different sets of perceptions of the rulers belonging to different sects of religious beliefs. The political determinism had greater effects on the demographic and environmental factors primarily on urban socio cultural institutions, which had compelling reasons for causing changes in the social and cultural practices. In such a situation, the values and patterns of culture of the conqueror group or host group dominated the majority groups of sophisticate polarity of the urban settlements.

Though on such occasions, the activities and functions of different institutions or subsystems within the urban society were virtually collapsed, the folk settlements having greater sense of belonging of their members collectively by virtue of sharing their norms, values and beliefs continued to remain integrated. The rural culture characterized by their historical nature, diversity and lower mobility were too indifferent to initate and adopt the said transformation. The belief systems suggesting active relationship between nature and culture were functional and the construction of cultural forms at the rural centres enabled the degenerated culture of the urban elites due to the said political or social turbulence, to enter into the greater sphere of socialization and cross cultural interactions with the other pole of folk culture. The social advantages of cultural diversities fostered the cultural richness of the folk culture which however was shared by the urban institutional elites at the crucial junctures of imminent crisis.

The folk cultures constituted a way of life of the commune members including the rituals, norms of behaviour and systems of beliefs. The wider patterns of social change affecting the unseated social elites at urban centers did not essentially penetrate the immune isolated centers of the folk art due to a psychological as well as physical lack of proximity. The vertical expansion of the folk cultural traits at the rural centers however continued to remain alive notwithstanding the waves of cocreion, duress and iconoclasm at the centers of power. In this regard I am tempted

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to quote the observations of G.C.M. Birdwood (Page 320 of The Arts of India-Delhi 1977), which are as under.

"India has undergone more religious and political revolutions than any other country in the world; but the village communities remain in full municipal vigor all over the peninsula. Scythian, Greek, Saracen, Afghan, Mongol and Maratha have come down from its mountains, and Portuguese, Dutch, English, French and Dane up out of its seas, and set up their successive dominations in the land; but the religious trades union villages have remained as little affected by their coming and going as a rock by the rising and falling of the tide; and there, at his daily work, has sat the hereditary village potter amid all these shocks and changes, steadfast and unchangeable for 3000 years, Macedonian, Mongal, Maratha, Portuguese, Dutch, English, French and Dane of no more account to him than the broken Potsherds lying round his wheel"

The same is true in the art of Bengal the reflection of which embodied folk aspersions in structural and formative qualities. An inherent feeling, the power of producing harmony through distribution of volumes and in surface decoration which have been construed as basic faculties of folk art existed among the Bengali artisans or craftsmen engaged in the creation of the enormous art objects of temple decoration during the mediaeval era. There had been a reverse diffusion of cultural traits through a route starting from the folk art centers to the degenerated socio spiritual urban institutions at the urban centers. Even the ordained priesthood accepted such changes taken place in the process of diffusion and the unsophisticated craftsmen inculcated within the contemporary practices of art the simplicity of the shapes, the spontaneity, directness and propriety of the ornamentation and attained the beauty of perfect symmetry and purity of forms as tangible gains of the terracotta art of the late mediaeval Bengal.

The diffusion or inter societal transmission of culture in the urban space turned out to be a priority at this phase of reality, in the face of cultural aggression of the outsiders. The marginal culture of the rural Bengal at that line was also retarded because of their peripheral or marginal position in the geography. The spread of the Bhakti movement in the meantime within the framework of Islamic statehood and the presence of non indigenous cultural traits, generated an internal coherence within the intra social systems of the two polarities of social stratification at the rural and urban centers which were hitherto dominated by the orthodox caste, community and religious bias as indicated hereinabove. So long as imperative, the urban centers being higher productive centers enjoyed the monopoly on institutional cultural properties, while the rural communes with all sorts of self sufficiency outside the periphery were suffering not only the spatial isolation but also continued to remain internally marginal because of social isolation and distance.

The temple art during the late mediaeval Bengal was a clear cut synthesis of the cult worship, revelation of humanized spirits and intellectual mysticism assimilating oral traditions with the scripted mythology in the relative time and space. The deeply religious foundation of the art was articulated by integration of folk traditions and formal institutional traditions— which had only been matters of visual exposures through interactive relationship of mutual enrichment. The enrichment was made possible in a situation when the formal or urban art was passing through a phase of contraction and needed a broader periphery for the sake of existence.

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We have already dealt with the aspects of acculturation reflected in the depictions of the terracotta images on the late mediaeval Bengal temples in the chapter themes and representations. The process of acculturation between different sects of beliefs or groups led to the acquisition of new cultural patterns, the impact of which may be felt in emergence of different mythological interpretations of official or local cults or images. The devastating influence of the Bhakti movement evoked circumstances where the vertical distances between two opposite polarities and different hierarchical inequalities were mitigated. The hierarchically stratified societies were denoted by a number of behavioral patterns and the vertical distance or distantiation was permanent one. Nevertheless the mutual relationship or tie up established between such opposite groups and inanimate objects of cultural significance, caused a qualitative change in the forms and contents of art during the relevant period.

The particular phase of social transformation may be considered as a phase of formalisation of the folk societies through emergence of a continuum between the polar opposite folk and urban societies, in which the folk elements turned very significant particularly at the stage of massive expansion of the art practices. In fact, the characteristic trait of the folk societies which are attached to the soil emotionally by tie of habit and economically by experience, rendered the contemporary art practices to become more and more down to earth and aesthetically enriched.

Religion in such a social phase embodied the most fundamental human needs and human problems. Ideas of spirits of the past and the rites embodying the ideas were the projections of the sentiments of living. Ideas of the soul and afterlife protected desires for continuity of the personality, and ideas of the gods projected wishes for more adequate and more complete control of human affairs. Many such concepts were adequately built which were looked to be emotional primarily, but had complex rational aspects of analysis and theological argument. Diversities in such beliefs among various divisions or sects were amazing and the available interpretation only place before us certain natural and supernatural phenomena with the common denominator of absolute belief in the god almighty. The observations of the sociologists in this direction that the belief alone does not constitute a religion, and the rites, mundane practices associated with the belief provided essential constituent of the whole, appears to be relevant while considering such issues.

The rituals, festivals, performance of rites, assemblies on religious occasions were integral part of the cultural practices and on a hindsight of such social activities reveal the humanitarian sensualities dominating the theological obligations in the participation of masses in such activities. In this context, the inferences drawn by the eminent sociologists that the rituals reflected and expressed the structural arrangements of the society and that they provided also occasions of group assembly and affirmed social values, appear to be relevant. Furthermore it is also observed that such practices stimulated economic productivity and conditioned the system of the distribution of resources and also allowed individuals to handle the social apparatus to their advantage.

Late mediaeval temples were constructed even though for the deities purporting to be personal gods, as spiritual obligations for providing social platforms in the radical spheres as indicated hereinbefore in the realm of humanization of social activities.

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III) Aesthetic structures— internal and external limits

The nature and circumstances of the contemporary art practices as revealed through efflorescence of a vast treasury of images as architectural embellishments lead to the fact that the aesthetic perception of the common people about the real world was a broader sphere of activity than art itself. The art practices involved not only artistic creativity of the exalted community of artists or craftsmen but also other manifestations of their aesthetic relationship with the realities around them. The situation presupposed a far reaching and active influence exerted by art on various aspects of material and cultural life and the participation of art in the process of transforming the real world.

The art activities reflected the tremendous significance of the contemporary aesthetic principles in various forms of the practical grasp of the real world, which extended beyond the confines of mere artistic creativity. These included spiritual impulse in contemplation of definite social recognition beyond the rigid caste barriers, quality of the environment including community rituals and practices as well as routine interactions of the same with those of the others, living with the elements of sensual delight and other analogous properties and other forms of entertainment in the real life. Though these forms cannot be contained within art categories, these undeniably constitute together with art, a single aesthetic culture and cannot be viewed as something divorced from the contemporary art. The historical mobility and flexibility of the phenomenal spheres characterize the evolution of a philosophy, which applies not only to the structure but also to the very substance of the subject. Changes in the substance of the subject matters relating to contemporary art activities were determined both by the objective process of the emergence of the new types of aesthetic activity such as combinations and incorporation of divergent animated or decorative art motifs, new art forms including those peculiarly related to crafting of woods and stone flakes for architectural embellishments and by changes in the objectives and problems.

One of the vital questions of the genesis of the contemporary art practices is the correlation between content and form in art. A dominating school of the present day aestheticians has been asserting on the unity of the content and form, the pre eminent role of content and the active role of the form. Though such perception finds some relevance in analyzing the problems in the late mediaeval art of temple decorations of Bengal, mere alluding to the fact that form and content in the works of art constituted an indivisible whole, does not appear to be adequately cognizable.

Now we would like to deal with the specific features of the form of contemporary plastic art in which they manifest themselves as opposed to their manifestations in other spheres of life. Incidentally it is worthwhile mentioning that with regard to the specific features peculiar to the individual art forms and genres, there were also features and laws common to all art forms and genres. The features or laws used to be equally applicable to enormous mystic literary works, literary illustrations, paintings, music, in a word to the contemporary art a whole. The visual art forms also while conforming to the norms and practices of the creativity in general, developed with constant reference to the concepts, trends and objectivities of the socio spiritual traits reflected in literature, music etc.The concrete works of the relevant visual art during the era did

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not start merely from the personal taste or preference of the donors, patrons, architects or builders of the temples or any subjective inclination or desire, but from the well founded systematically substantiated objectivities of the radical socio philosophical properties of the Bhakti movement. The erstwhile absolute prescriptive cum dogmatic edifices and passive contemplative art practice of the immediate past were overshadowed by a new socio aesthetic ideal of an important historical epoch.

The essence of the art practices of the era is found in totality of the social relations among men and their lives which were socially conditioned with happiness, human sufferings and all other facets of their inner lives. The hopelessly outmoded trends in the spiritual conditions of human existence in the immediate past were set aside by the newly full fledged profound substantiation of ideas and principles, which created a great variety of visual forms, in which they appear before us today. In fact it became an interesting phenomenon of the history that the era was marked as an age of greatest artistic achievement in which divergent aesthetic conceptions have been created and that also particularly at a time marked by socio economic stagnation or regression. Mediaeval Bengal at this phase of transition in the sixteenth and seventeenth century AD withnessed significant erosion in the level of morality, widespread social degeneration and rampant corruption in all the important spheres of life which caused catastrophe to the external and internal fields of creativity. Irrational fantasies incompatible with the truly human world, corruptions in perceptual reflections, mysticism with erotic orientation and harmful activity of the materialist traits etc, prevailed upon the then culture life of the people which subdued the creativity at this crucial socio historical juncture. At this stage, the appearance and existence of the new wave of cultural generalization bringing out a positive aesthetic relationship between art and reality synthesized attempts to define artistic practice and relate it to the process of man's perception and apprehension of the world around them.

In the process of semiotic method of putting up non figurative we well as floral motifs as the language of art in the Islamic era in Bengal bringing out meticulous precision and refinement of structural qualities as reflected in Tantipara Mosque and Quadam Rasul Mosque of Gaur and Adina Mosque of Pandua, a psychological subjectivism developed which demarcated the language of art from the artistic means of communication. Nevertheless the imminent bare realities arising out the process had demonstrative effects on the efflorescence of varieties of images at the stage of regeneration in the seventeenth century AD, whose essence consisted not in apprehension of the world of things, but also the first and formost in pinpointing the world of human relations and people's relation to the objective world. Less or better known mythologies representing the emotions, sentiments and passions of the common people staying in the main or downstream, which had age old central foundation could find adequate elements of objectivity in as much as the material dimensions of the popular mythologies were aesthetically and mystically related to the daily life of the people who strongly believed in the mythological characters as if their own neighbours and in close affinity. The ideas regarding art therefore emanated as exclusively a matter of people's relationship to the world around them and the representation of the given objects

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refracted as it is through people's eyes and heart. The art of the era counterbalanced material dimensions of the behavioral aspects of the people in so far as it introduced to the world of things a human element and significance and its task was to represent that world as it appeared to them.

The vast treasury of images entailing even the events and occurrences of daily life including the details of social rituals and customs, daily lives of the ascetics, popular entertainments, eros and the leisured aristocracy of the Zaminders etc. reveal the various ways of materialising the artistic ideas and percepts and expanded the horizon of the ideas of art beyond mere mystification and idealist approach. It had never been a passive reflection of reality, rather played an active transforming role, which amended and improved the essence of contemporary art to the status of a form of social consciousness. The passions, sentiments, agonies, ecstasies including even the apparent contradictions in the social stratification in the commonest perceptions of the people could penetrate in the principles of art signifying thereby the growing role of aesthetics in the humble, subdued and subordinated life of the common people. All such manifestations therefore organically combined functional, constructive and aesthetic roles of the art at the relevant time.

During the era of strong dogmatism and obscurantism of the dominating social forces in the fifteenth and sixteenth century AD. a contradiction with regard to the aesthetic limits of the visual art continued to exist which countermanded the intellectual and emotional production, thereby affecting the aesthetically expressed mode of thinking. History of the Bengal art, while absorbing and assimilating the transitional trends or tendencies brought the contradictions to the fore and the same was synthesized in yet another form of social consciousness thereby reassuring the social nature of art and revealing its occupation of a specific place in the life of the society.

The artistic generalization at the culminating stage of the art in different mediums was both artistic cognition and ideology which made the phases characteristic of creative practices. The excellent representative specimens of late mediaeval Bengal temple had been built in the culmination stage of the seventeenth century AD, when Shyam Rai and Jorabangla temples of Bishnupur, Kantaji Temple of Kantanagar, Dinajpore and Raghunathjiu Temple of Ghurisha, Birbhum and many other richly decorated edifices in Bengal. were constructed. The exclusiveness, veracity and sensitivities of the elaborate art motifs as well as practices at the culmination stage sustained, survived and dominated which nevertheless started receding gradually in keeping with the changes in the political ideas, concepts in justice, morale, technology, art, philosophy and religion in the passage of time and space. The six Goswamins of the Vrindavana Sect of Vaishnavism in Bengal who codified the spiritual transcriptions of Chaitanyadev embraced the form of social consciousness further generated through radical movements of the common masses but framed such consciousness in the bonds of norms, systems and rituals. The sphere of social consciousness which was exceptionally broad at the initial stage of the movement was exposed to a gradual recession with the formal codes and norms prevailing upon the spontaneities of the people thereby affecting the society's intellectual and spiritual life in general. As we are aware, the creative craft practices which were highly important provided visual elucidation of the main direction of the ideological struggle at the relevant time. But the spitirual foundation of such

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struggle and the comprehension of their own life by the craftsmen which contributed to generalisation in accordance with the ideas of humanism and social justice, were gradually exposed to a aesthetic reality in which the conflict between the realism and idealism in froms became imperative. The question whether such sense of the realism extended the artistic vision was immaterial in so far as the European cultural migration at the pre or post Plassey war period provided necessary space for some sort or indispensability of assimilation and to be more pragmatic, even resorting to some views as regards vaibility of copybook realism as a trend. Such circumstances, instead of rendering more profound artistic understanding as was apparently contemplated, caused gradual loss in the eternal flavour, metaphors and even grotesque language of the sculptural art of the culmination phase of the seventeenth century AD, thereby paving the way for greater appearance of fluid and dispersed vision in the contemporary art. The craftsmen were the responsible and crucial members of the society and used to rally for a specific cause. They used to maintain the ideas and images serving the space permeated by the social consciousness and did not apprehend futility or absurdity or forbidding reality of an irrational world. The fundamentally divergent approaches of the contemporary art affirming vital resilience, profound interest and significance of human existence though refuted the philosophy of materialism approached to the correlation between the art and reality. The art practices therefore were constrained to proceed not as the creative reproduction of the reality, but as a mechanical repetition of the real phenomena of life and a straightforward copying of these phenomena. Incidentally we would like to highlight a specific instance of a hybrid category of temple as glaringly evident in the art and architecture of Chandranath Siva Temple at Hetampur, Birbhum constructed in the mid nineteenth century AD. The octagonal pinnacled temple not only bears direct affinity of the European architectural patterns, but also a massive reorientation of the established norms and practices. A profile of semi divine images of the European overtone as per cathedral order were placed on the pinnacled roofs which evidences a mismatch and also mechanical copying of the alien trends without much application of mind. The form and contents of the sculptural arrangements of the temple manifest gross deviations from the foundation of naturalism in as much as a cluster of images of the British identity including those pertaining to the royalty of British and potraiture of British celebrities and aristocracies found significant mention on the wall decoration. Moreover the images also testify a close affinity of the forms of European copy book realism. The art therefore turned void of the ideological content and lost its social significance.

Neverthless the reality continued to reflect in its own way and the so called reality's priority in relation to art presupposed the existence of concepts which stem from the then cultural stratification. Referring to such emerging changes in the historical perspective, it can be observed that the percepts, imagination, morality and thoughts of the artists embedded in the traditions were exposed to adoption of the pseudo realistic stance thereby entailing a process of the erosion of vitality and core substance in the second half of the nineteenth century AD. Even in such later transition, when the regular mythological as well as secular motifs and objects used, there had been discomforts on the part of the artists or craftsmen in putting up the tints of newly accepted

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realism on the surface decorations which can be traced in the specimens related to the epoch. Consumerism, lack of devotion and also lack of integrity or probity of section of the dominating social class in the British Raj, who had been beneficiaries of the economic redistribution, brought about substantial changes and embraced the space of art which caused catastrophe in the sphere of aesthetic creativity. Within this specific limited historical perspective, art itself lost its direct and indirect relations with the established traditions and lost its qualities as a form of social consciousness. By the end of the nineteenth century AD, one of the greatest historical phases in the field of Bengal art lost the core of its interest and became distorted beyond recognition.

Here it is appropriate to dwell upon an elementary external fact. In the central issue of the art concerned at the relevant time, man constituted the main and all important aspect in the purely quantitative respect which sometimes had direct representation, the other times had the actual essence of the phenomena. Despite such fact, man being the principal subject did not hem in the artists or craftsmen, though allusions of this proposition did not by any means dispense with the concrete knowledge and representation of the environment he lived. Truthful depiction of the environment, milieu, and conditions of life is here stigmatized as something little short of naturalism, which impedes the artist's most important goal— unfolding man's inner world. This is evident in unfolding of different facets of human soul and sensitive elements of life expressed in passionate terms in the subjects of depiction on the late mediaeval temples of Bengal. It is in fact that the art at its formative and culmination phases in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century AD was concerned with an integral reproduction of man's life depicting man in totality of their relations with each other and the world around them, representing various aspects of their life and the ways in which the diverse activities of men interweave. The art therefore reflected phenomena of life, evaluated them as beautiful or ugly, lofty or base, tragic or comic, which were ideological or aesthetic realities of time.

Visual art during the ages had a coinciding space along with other intellectual art forms as literature, poetics and other performing fields which provided a fuller and broader representation of the real world in the diversity of its direct and indirect connections than the form of visual art of artistic creativity. Despite such fact the visual art as a whole possesed cognitive significance as we find that the knowledge which we glean from the same covers a distinct, concrete sphere of real phenomena and finds expression in specific form. The first and foremost knowledge obtained from the art form was of emotional kind and then followed to the sphere of intellectual activity. It is however possible to ascertain from the vast treasury of artworks of the late mediaeval Bengal how the pleasurable sensation worked behind creative art practices and in fact how men lived in the said period and to what extent the sense of spirit prevailed upon the community as a whole.

During the said period the art forms telescoped the experience of the precipitious flow of life and broadened man's horizons giving him varied knowledge of men's lives in different circum-

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stances shedding light on the essence of phenomena taken from real life and singling out in the later such aspects which remained beyond man's grasp in the ordinary circumstances of his life experience. Contemporary art therefore turned out as revelation even when it came to familiar aspects of everyday lives and it could spotlight facets of life which enables us to see the familiar in the unfamiliar and unfamiliar in the familiar. Though it is not deniable that the art did not present us with the historical facts in chronological and documented order, we observe that it could shed light on the fate of the people through individual destinies in the best possible way, which is deemed improbable through any other faculty in the public life. Art and literature as complimentary and contributory spheres of creativity during the said period were infinitely subtle and wise instruments of the time capable of observing what the immediate predecessors lost sight of and became instruments of understanding and explaining in rational manners.

The epistemological interpretation of the diverse images appearing on the terracotta shrines of late mediaeval Bengal through presentation of the creativity and reflection, cannot be considered as substantiation of the vital tenets of aesthetics. Though it is believed that it was a creative activity, it cannot be said that the artists or craftsmen were exclusively concerned with projections and designs, rather they had active involvement in life which had immense cognitive potential and they had specific, creative and active relation to the world around them. It is imperative that the art had many facets, but precisely its epistemological aspect only can enable us to pinpoint all its sides and principles. Therefore we cannot avoid interpretation of the said art as artistic cognition. It is worthwhile mentioning that unlike other contemporary institutional arts, art in Bengal was not the only true means to reaching an understanding of life and that the artists or craftsmen were endowed with uncommon or mystical inspiration. The particular epoch offered a series of most significant works of art providing myth and knowledge in the historical tract, but the theory of self expression as generally contemplated in other institutional arts does not find relevance here, in so far as such works of art were never considered as myths and be sought in their capacity to provide symbolic insight into the future. Art was inextricably bound up with its social functions and role of fantastic and subconscious myth creation by the artists or craftsmen, does not find corroborations in the tracts of the contemporary art history of Bengal. In analyzing the nature of contemporary art in its sociological aspect and approaching the same art as the vehicle of the dominating ideology of the particular time, we observe that the ongoing trends complement the essence of art in its epistemological aspect as reflection of social being. It operated through substantiation of the active role of the agent of reflection in the process of artistic creativity.

Incidentally it will be appropriate to mention that there had been remarkable combination of sober objectivity and intense passion which are seen to have association with the ideas and values of the practicing of art by the artists or craftsmen. While spiritual values were mirrored in man's goals and ideals and in the late mediaeval social stratification in Bengal, art expressed spiritual and aesthetic values which enhanced people's awareness of a sense of oneness and common interest uniting certain classes. The historical factors shaping art had been intrinsically related

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to certain eternal and universal human values, which occupied a large place in the sphere of people's intellectual and cultural activity. The works of art in their unique and unprecedented diversity may be considered to acquire constant meaning of lasting kind when the temporal and transient also found their expression in such works. The tones and the tints gave voice to a more general idea most important to people's understanding of art as a socio historical phenomena in which social consciousness was not merely ideas belonging to a specific time, or specific social formation and its development involved eternal principles which shaped the continuity of human culture.

An apparent scrutiny of the aesthetic images in the light of cognitive, ideological and educative functions of the subject art signifies that the same exerted a decisive influence on the formation of people's aesthetic sense, taught them of apprehend beauty intrinsic to the phenomena of life and take delight in the beauty. The aesthetic function of art therefore lay in helping people to assimilate a specific socio aesthetic ideal and develop their aesthetic potential. The importance of the contemporary art surpassed all other forms of social consciousness when it came to enhancing people's creative attitude to life, stimulating imagination that could transform life, people's ability to attain an integral and concrete awareness of the essence of the phenomena from the real world and their capacity for aesthetic judgment.

A further look to the functions of the contemporary art revealed that life in all its diversity and the main trends of historical development of the epoch were reflected only by all forms of social consciousness taken together and that such forms enriched each other, developing not in isolation, separate one from the other, but interrelated in clearly defined ways. In the immediate past of the mediaeval epoch, dogmatism in perceptions which led to oversimplification of aesthetic ideals manifested straight line link between the official religion of the rulers and art. The propagators of the dogmatism suggested that the politico and art practices existed side by side like two independent principles and the value of the later was characterized by the former. In fact the crude oversimplification of this sort was alien to the nature of art. Neverthless the inherent contradiction underlying the very fabric became gradually acute and synthesized in radicalism in cultural politics, when we are able to find that the talent, honesty, truthfulness and objective of the artists and craftsmen replaced the didactic illustration of dogmatic approach. The socio political significance of the art became gradually determined by its truthfulness, its convincing reflection and profound revelation of the leading trends observed in the life of the society.

The contemporary art stem from the humanist essence as we are able to trace in the chronology of manifestation of human values in the diverse depictions through visual representations of mythological teachings in keeping with the age old 'Sruti' and 'Smriti' cults of belief. Such depictions cannot be considered to be of absurd virtues as the representations were of social types aiming to shape living human characters, characterizing men as members of the society as a whole. Consequently through its presentation of human behaviour promoted a set moral principles. The contemporary aesthetic principles incorporated ethical elements which were natural and inalienable. The nature of principles affirmed in aesthetic ideal and the truthfulness

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with which the life is reflected, affirmed the fundamental principles of life. The situation was ideally achieved in Bengal and was retained in duration of about two centuries, but thereafter became exposed to departures from truth and distortion of life's truth in the nineteenth century AD which inevitably striped art of the necessary moral significance. Vulgar erotic depictions of large sized terracotta sculptures appearing as decorative elements on the house of god as evident in the stage of decadence of the art in the late nineteenth century in a number of temples of the Midnapore and Howrah districts, testify that the so called contemporary mass culture were not the results of artists' whims, but rather the logical expression of a rejection of life's truth.

The intrinsic emotionality and the role of imagination offered by the contemporary religious movements played a mojor role in efflorescence of art practices. Indian art as we all know creatively reproduced the religious themes and imagination, which though not demanded as reality continued to bring a realistic view of the world to the people, who used to accept the same as reality– pure and simple. Until the seventeenth or eighteenth century AD, art not only in Bengal or India, but throughout the world evolved hand in hand, as it were, with various forms of religion and been subject to religious influence. The art in general was subject to ecclesiastical influence. The major issues concerning the trend may be indicated as under.

a) The traditional society inherited the basic tenet that mythology represented the first artistic formulation of life expreience in man's imagination and is related to the expression of people's artistic creativity at the early stages of their historical development. Art took themes from mythology as myths were the foundation of contemporary religion and also in view of the fact that popular mythology embraced wider implications.

b) The institutional or social bond shaped and controlled in general the social or communal or caste relations. Religious and spiritual outlook exerted the most powerful influence over the whole life of the society.

The shadow of religion at all times till the late mediaeval epoch can be traced behind the enduring greatness and brilliance of art, which represented the spiritual searching of the people either as individual or as a member of the community. It was however evident that evangelical subjects occupying the space, provided more or less an external framework in which the artists and craftsmen also availed of the scope for expression of joy and happiness, pain and suffering, the radiant and somber in people's lives.

Realism as a phenomena is considered by a section of scholars as one of the greatest achievements of mankind. The divergent orientation of the hard core realist art in the Indian way of life however could not prevail upon the passions and sentiments of the people, who discarded the exposition and embodiment of the visual realities which are fundamentally incompatible with any kind of religious faith. The use of myths or religious images and themes depicting an overall moral climate and way of life served the purpose of aesthetic pleasure and sharpened the sense of the beautiful, essential to the people's mind and heart.

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IV. Status of the art forms or artistic images

The presentation of the diverse artistic images in the late mediaeval decoration of temples was in fact an ideal picture of the objective world and artistic picture of the spirituality and reality living in the consciousness of the artists and perceived accordingly by the viewer. Their description was objectivisation of artistic ideas which may be treated as materialization representing realistion of the image in the material of art and making possible their perceptions through people's senses.

The essence of the artistic images in the contemporary Bengal art stem out as subjective picture of the objective world around the people. The underlying sphere of human knowledge substantiating the norms and practices inherent in the artistic reproduction of reality points to the nature of artistic imges and reveals the essential properties of the art practices. The concept of image derived from the contemporary artworks, which has been interpreted by a section of authors as the first and foremost reflection of the external world in which people used to live, cannot be considered conclusive, in as much as the manifestations of psychological activity, sensation, perception etc, were also contributory factors constituting such images. The artistic images in precise forms were more aesthetic than epistemological with derivative qualities of thinking through images and specification of the nature of the artistic reflection of the reality. The identification of the categories of artistic images— their common properties, forms of consciousness, concepts and the judgements to a large extent paved the way for solution of the all important question as to the place and role of art in the life of the contemporary society. The system of imagery in art with its graphics and expressive means provided diverse artistic devices which sometimes took the form of metaphors or images. Metaphor in visual art was a form of allegory and was a poetic trope, whereas image in narrow sense represented an expression with figurative meaning. We cannot ignore the contributions of the contemporary mystic literature in the late mediaeval Bengal towards conceptualization and formation of visual art, as the poems or small literary depictions even presented complete images, which were ideal pictures of the objective world. The artistic picture of reality living in the consciousness of the poets or the artists represented the realization of an image in respective materials and made possible its perception through people's senses. The implication of Image not merely as a specific form for the reflection of life but also the concrete content of the reflection itself, has been delineated in the contemporary art works as a whole including the works of literature. The integrated characterization of the phenomena of life including the anthropomorphosis of the worshipped deities, feudal social stratification, asceticism, erotic habits and daily life etc were related to the artistic ideas behind the elaborate picturisation of the decorative panels or plaques in which they appear and presented in concrete sensual aesthetically significant forms.

The art during the said historical epoch operated not only just through images but also through concepts and in a very limited cases replaced images with concept. We can find a variety of examples supporting the proposition where local or sectoral beliefs prevailed upon the canonical images in art and architecture and concepts of alien art or architectural motifs including those

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of western and other indigenous origin in the conceptual form entered the sphere of art activity during the relevant time. The era was also to a certain extent characterized by a synthesis of images and art concepts and such minute incorporation of concepts in art did not deprive the artists to cultivate their creative faculties in art. Visual art and literature were developed in the same time and space in closer relationship, which can be traced in the cognitive contents of the both. The poets or literary composers frequently had recourse to images while illustrating their ideas or expounding those in a more accessible and emotional light, but this did not lead to substitution of images for concepts. Images in such cases were distinguished by their essenatial structure. Neverthless in the visual art the purported synthesis of concepts and images did not reduce art to mere illustration or rheotoric nor did cause any detraction from the ideological or emotional power. The innocent low profile hereditary artists or craftsmen of the late mediaeval Bengal explored all possibilities for invocation of images and also developed conceptual art practices. They did not exhibit deep sense of creative fantasy but had shown their capability of transforming ideas into images, of thinking, deliberating and feeling in images. They had thorough reliance on their minds and feelings and maintained the strength of their convictions and beliefs, the impact of which can be traced in the wealth of meaningful historical resources in Bengal.

The events and phenomenon evident in the glossary of images appearing on the late mediaeval temples of Bengal which have been elaborately detailed hereinbefore in the chapter on the themes and representations, denoted interweaving and interrelations of the real life and emotional life of the people with their all possible elements— necessary or co incidental, the inevitable and random, the universal and the particular, the inner and outer etc. The image bearing fabric of the craft works contained creatively reshaped materials derived from the spiritual and practical life of the people which were enriched by the power of imagination of the artists or craftsmen and lent new associations and implications when reproducing a comprehensive picture to the viewers and beholders. The phenomenon was also varied in the sensual concreteness of the works and their identity.

The images are endowed with individual forms as evident in the variations in compostions and stylization of works by the different groups or guilds of artists headed by the leader architect from time to time, instances of which have been discussed earlier in the chapter on the identity of the artists or craftsmen, embodied a generalization drawn from real life and unfolded their inner essence. The images expressed traits that characterized whole social groups, classes, people. The artistic image not only served to depict events but also unfolded the essential nature of the phenomena. Each character or image was endowed with the life of its own, yet groups of characters had common roots with similar manifestations in other ways of life, expressed as they might well be in other individual forms. It was the task of the leader artist or craftsman to show those roots.

It cannot be denied that the individual in art differed from the real life material in that it is not only reproduced from life but also was gleaned straight from the real life, yet at the same

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time it was, as it were amended by the artists in such a way that superfluous details did not obscure people's understanding of the fundamental and the essential. The general was unfolded through what was individualized. In all such instant artistic images we find a concentration of the general and essential in particular and the unique. The typical of the art was a unity of generalization and individualization. The concrete individual form of a material drawn from real life and reflected in the contemporary art was transformed. Incorporating as did an element of generalization it acquired inimitable individuality and expressive power.

While the direct presentation occupied a modest and limited place, imaginative recreation of prototypes through transformation, selection of features and properties emerged as a common practice. The typification of images developed in the Bengal art within the overall framework of the great Indian art traditions, demanded that the artists would attain a deeper understanding of life of prototypes, which did not simply convey outer facets and characteristics. It was incumbent upon the artists to select the essential characteristics and traits, generalize the same to recreate them in a new integral picture of life. The process however provided relief to the artists and craftsmen from schematism and blatant didacticism.

From the diverse images appearing as the decorative elements on the late mediaeval temples of Bengal and the varying degrees of phenomena revealed through them we may classify the contemporary art motifs in the following segments.

a) Bas relief linear sculptures in horizontal space with lower depth in surface, where figures do not stand far out from the grounds on which they are found— The value and potency of the images are transferred in an agreeable and expressive low relief sculptures with lesser plasticity of value in their own account. The grace of line is however evident in this particular type of sculptures. The representation is more or less two dimensional and these are commonly considered as simpler art. The trend is evident particularly in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century temples in the districts of Midnapore, Hooghly and Bankura.

b) High relief sculptures with three dimensional plasticity with an average depth in surface, where bold reliefs are found to be standing out well from the surface. The selective and inventive trend is experienced primarily in volume which is awakened in visual forms, movement with their motion or rest with their repose, though their plane of imagination are not too realistically fashioned. The innovative trend is the hall mark of the sculptural art of the late mediaeval Bengal in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Glaring examples of temples evidencing such trend are Shyam Rai Temple of Bishnupur, Jor Bangla Temple of Bishnupur, Kantaji Temple of Kantanagar, Dinajpore (Bangladesh), Sandhya Siva Temple at Puthia, Rajshahi (Bangladesh), Narayan Temple at Lohagara, Raigram, Jessore (Bangladesh), Raghunathjiu Temple at Ghurisha, Birbhum etc.

c) Vertical motifs in wood carving compostions translated in similar volumes of clay versions. Traditional carving of wood in vertical fashion in its depth and intensity of the supernatural motifs of hunting or battling by the horse riders or artillery soldiers, action movements of

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the wild animals which maintained the basic characteristics of the medium of wood were imitated or translated in the clay versions and were placed in the vertical angular projections of the temple edifices. The sculptural motifs had limited plasticity and volumes which looked like restricted by the limitations of wooden medium, nevertheless appeared expressive of the movement and grace of the energy and conflict. The representative monuments having such stylized depictions have been mentioned separately in the chapter of themes and representations.

d) Representative plastic arts in stone from the established traditional institutions of India translated in similar volumes of clay versions. The trend survived as common denominator of all India tradition under the strong influence of the institution and the terracotta version of small size figurines which were more appropriate as the genre subject and looked earthly than the heavenly lore of the plastic art. We find this motif applied to architectural ornamentation on selective or sporadic basis as the local folk craftsmen who were the architects of such temples possessed the imagery and skills of different space, which was not conducive for cultivation of heightened aesthetics in succession of the great Indian heritage of art. Traces of the trend are however evident on several temples not as a common phenomenon, but in the total unity of the sculptural arrangements.

e) Running panel of compositions of different depictions in a series of low relief figurations with lower depths. The predominance of the union of many figurines in panels to form a single continuous space, balance, symmetry, proportion of length and parallelism are all found in such type of running panels appearing generally above the main entrance to the sanctums or false doors on the other sides which are commonly of lesser dimensions and depths. Popular mythological legends involving a series of actions attracting the core awareness of common masses were potrayed on the particular space imparting grace and total unity to the worshipers visiting the temple. Though such executions are found to be commonly lacking surface depths, the rhythm, the harmony and balanced movement of lines amazed the viewers.

f) Modelled superimposed images with realistic stylization with full appreciation of plasticity against flat surface is also a distinct category. Apart from the plaques or panels appearing on the exterior or interior walls of the temples, we observe in a number of cases that images of birds and other supporting motifs separately modelled in fully three dimensional plasticity have been placed on different locations to enhance the beauty of the ornamentation. We also find appearance of larger or life sized sculptures of the deities appearing on the niches articulated on the false doors situated on the sides other than main entrance to the sanctum. The large sized terracotta sculpture of fish incarnation of Lord Vishnu at the Char Bangla temple at cluster at Barnagar, Azimgunj, Dt Murshidabad, and the image of Goddess Jagatdhatri appearing on southern side niche and that of the Mahishasuramardini on the northern side niche at the Siva temple at Bamunpara, Ilambazar, Dt Birbhum are glaring examples of this type of embellishements.

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g) Solid clay models in high volumes and figurations of unimpressive plasticity placed in different directions of the outer walls— This feature is particularly evident in the case of Rashmanchas or Dolmanchas which were generally installed for annual festivity of the deity enshrined in the main temple. The installation of dwarpalas or guards and drummers or musicians standing on the door sides are the later developments at the phase or decadence of the great artistic developments taken place in the seventeenth/eighteenth century AD. Though realistically fashioned in three dimensions, the volume of solid clay in such large sized sculptures reveal lack of depth and intensity. The daintiness and tenderness of the works contrast strongly with the majesty of the elaborate terracotta sculpturing of the immediately preceding period. The contours in such type of works melt together with the block of clay masses and there had been a diminished precision in modelling. The trend has been frequent in the district of Midnapore and Howrah, the details of which have been discussed in the chapter on themes and representations.

h) Non figurative geometric forms or reliefs in running panels or plaques have been used as primary or supporting motifs in the sculptural arrangements. These are supporting motifs used for integration of the surface ornamentation through rhythmic placements in the totality of silhouette. Consistency of the motifs with that of the practiced living surface on the temples tends to unfold the corporeal beauty of the ornamented terracotta architecture.

i) Independent moulded or modelled patterns to support the core structures taking different ornamental shapes on the arches, roofs, lintels, domes and other external architectural members.

j) Pre shaped bricks used in divisions or sub divisions for demarcation and delineation of horizontal or vertical space of the walls in linear or curvilinear directions.

The expressiveness of the forms was determined by several factors. The perception of the forms was an active process. In order to perceive a form the vision of the artists or craftsmen had to be active and sensuality also needed to be active as were so in perceiving similar forms in the past. Moreover the process of perception of a form required an activity of attention and interest to the successive elements of the form and a further activity in remembering and synthesizing them into a whole. This activity, since it is evoked by the form in as much an element in its life, is as clearly its own as its shape.The alteration or changes in the common habitual forms demanded a perception in constant, whereas the repetition through simple and unvarying forms though demanded attention was monotonous and reposeful. Both the said trends have been evident in a cluster of temple decorations, nevertheless the variations at once never distracted attention of the viewers, on the other hand exposed the progressive elements of the contemporary art forms. This, the primary source of the vital quality of forms was supplemented by elements derived from associations. The forms, irrespective of their variations suggested the movement of objective elements of similar form and it might be interpreted according to the feeling of those movements, in the imagination it might be seemed to move along the very form themselves. Sometimes the forms were found to be heavy or delicate, sometimes light or ungainly as the bodies

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were. Finally the interpretation of forms is further enriched by the imagination re-creating the forms by the craftsmen with their mastery, ease, vigor, delicacy in execution and placed their feeling in execution itself. The craftsmen appreciated the qualities most readily and strongly yet, since the works were of potentially universal value.

The forms were unified according to the three modes of harmony, balance and evolution. The repetition of the same form conferred a harmonious unification upon the composition. Sameness of direction and parallelism of forms created a like unification. Another type of harmonious unification of lines was continuity. The classical geometrical forms of composition, the approach, intersection, interweaving of forms sometimes used to form one network. Symmetrically disposed shapes and forms, whose directions were opposed had the balanced form of unity. Whenever shapes were so disposed that they formed a line leading up to a given shape, wherever again lines converged into a single point there seemed to be a case of evolution.

One of the most interesting and complex types of organization of forms is rhythm. the balanced and harmonious movement of forms, as evident in a number of panels of the terracotta temple decorations. The forms became rhythmical even when there was a balanced alteration of the direction or proportion of the length of the segments. The forms made up points constituting shapes which are arranged on a surface and the arrangement of masses in undulating curves sometimes in a horizontal manner added a value of feeling all the quiet.

The contents of the art and their purpose as evident in the late mediaeval temple decorations was not to express mere things but to express "concrete states of the soul" the center of which was always some feeling, though not at all times the exact fidelity was found in the representation of the objects. Representation was found to such an extent as were necessary to give back their life. Necessary above all was the object as a whole for to it the feelings of the viewers were attached. The synthetic images which would give significant features only were avoided and the artists or craftsmen resorted to painstaking and detailed images on most of the occasions. The artists or craftsmen were aware of the exact truth underlying the depicted objects in keeping with which they had chosen and composed the same for expressive purposes. The objects when represented exactly like the perceived objects, they tended to lose the expressive power of their own and became mere signs or equivalent of things. A certain amount of variation from the normal was necessary in order that the sense symbols should call attention to themselves. The craftsmen sometimes rendered a unique feeling towards the represented themes when they exerted courage in the use of subtle language of mediums and lines requiring sometimes the distortion of the real local qualities of the objects. Had the creative craftsmen made simple copies of the objects, it would not have been possible for them to evoke usual emotional responses of the viewers to it.

The variation or deviation may not be considered as departure from the truth. The extent of prominent realism in such works of art was largely matters of conventions and representations and were never mere excuses for decoration. The representations had their own intrinsic values and without reference to them, the forms and mediums might at best be construed as nothing more than interesting objects. The mediums and the lines employed on the objects are so disposed

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that they decorate the surface and hold the devotees or viewers there through sheer rhythm and quality. Yet at the same time and through their very ornamental power, they made the devotees or viewers more keenly to the beauty of the object they represented. Between the immediate values of the mediums and lines there existed harmony, stimulating the pliable clay going with stimulating lines and the resulting feeling tone of the medium being consonant with that of the objects depicted. It has put an impression that one has given the other over again and so each enhanced the other.

Terracotta sculptural works displayed elaborately expressive use of the medium of pliable clay in such a manner as to make the viewers believe the representations as real and alive. On the other hand the wilful distortion of the forms sometimes were all within the possibility of recognition, leaving no scope to guess what was in fact represented. The distortion was brought before the imagination so as to serve its purpose successfully and the value thereof appeared as creative variations deliberately caused to enhance the potentials and beauty of the images. The process of such experiments of forms formed a tradition which were never expressive of abstract and objectless emotions alone. The composition of forms and the structural qualities through processing the objects rendered the emotions concrete and definite. Not mere feelings in sculpting and crafting themselves conveyed, but the presence of the nature was the substance of such normal artworks. It was not possible to express the feeling of the weight and bulk of objects, their distribution in three dimensions, or the value of their shadows or atmospheric enveloping, without the representation of weight, bulk and shadow and atmosphere and perspective. Every increase in power to represent nature added a new power to express feeling which varied with its objects. The representations were veiled in feeling and they were so veiled that the same may sometimes be seen pretty much as the same really was and then again with parts concealed and often transformed. The terracotta artworks tried to unite fidelity to the full qualities of the objets in the pliable medium in order to render the more typical responses to the nature.

The contemporary artworks are unique examples of man's natural and spiritual experience becoming more significant than vagrant subconscious whims, which made such art as luminously purposive. The subject matter was determined by the language, medium and the line. Besides an imitation of more or less exact, presenting an imagined world of concrete things similar to those appearing in vision, it also presented an inner world which is expressed only so far as it could be revealed in gestures and attitudes of the human or animal figures as the same was in mood attached to things and their shapes. An accepted proposition is imperative to mention here that space is the universal container in which all elements of the visible world are disposed. Likewise the terracotta artworks also included a representation of space as it was never the intention of the artists or craftsmen that the representations stood alone without environment or relation. In front, the space of such artworks was limited by the plain of the surface on which the same has been crafted, back of which everything appeared to belong so that nothing came forward out towards the viewer. But behind backward, the space was limited and only finite depths

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could be indicated by the convergence of perspective lines and gradual fading of the lines, due to limitations inherent to the medium of pliable clay.

The represented space of the plaques and panels of sculptural decorations was restricted by the frame which served the purpose of cutting of the imagined space from all relations to the real space. The compositions within the frame did harmonise with the main tones of the crafted objects so that it can be seemed that both of them belonged together. Though the panelled terracotta sculptures is not essentially a spatial art, the temporal elements are found to prevail in the "specious present"— the single moment of action or motion. The lines were not dead or static, but alive, they progress and vibrate; by their means a smile, the rippling of a stream, the movement of a dance etc. are well depicted. The space of craft was no abstract aspect of things such as the geometer elaborates. To be in a common space with other things implies, for the pictorial imagination of the world, to be played upon the same light and to be enveloped in the same atmosphere. The art therefore had its being and moved with the space, light and air.

The degree of plasticity varied in execution of the terracotta crafted objects and in most of the cases the objects have been represented in low plasticity, though the vision was supplemented with the kinesthetic and tactile images involved in the realization of the volumes with the outlines beings clear and sharp. The representation of the volume in different degrees is well signified in the temple terracotta panels of the late mediaeval Bengal. Their aesthetic value lies in masquerading life inside the shapes of the things free from their burdens and responsibilities. Volumes have been placed rhythmically in space and have been unified in terms of principles of harmony and balance. The essence of plasticity has been achieved primarily through lines and volumes.

To the common devotees and viewers, the terracotta craftworks brought before them a series of mythological and social objects with all their expressive details, made them feel in their imagination, awakened their passionate interest which caused them to see and feel more vividly and to subdue passion to a glowing contemplation. The representative artworks on some of the exquisite monuments in the seventeenth or early eighteenth century AD placed before us the images which are not only sensuously beautiful but also soothingly communicative through gesture, pose and countenance of the crafted representations. Though the sculptural representations are synonyms of the mythological, mystic literary references of the contemporary Bengal, it can never be said that the objects are catalogued from the other external sources. The works are essentially self explanatory. When a scene is represented by a part of story, the whole instantly becomes well known in connection with depicted picture and are recognized without external aid and are admitted of a certain completeness in its various incidents. Moreover the depiction of the relation of man to others and the delineation of momentary and self sufficient glimpses of social life are united by a common interest and placed in the appropriate background bears the essence of legitimacy, which had remarkable significance in the contemporary art practices.

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The revelations of the late mediaeval temple sculptures of Bengal in the forms and shapes of the diverse natural objects are mostly through their appeal to the amorous, parental and gregarious feelings and through the complete organization of the forms. There was in fact not much of the technical problems to give the material of pliable clay semblance to the desired objects. Although primarily for sight, the semblance was not exclusive so. The crafted shapes were not two dimensional, but plastic. Our experience of it is primarily one in volume. The full appreciation of the plasticity is not possible due to their placement on surface of the walls restricting the vision and non affordability of kinesthetic sensations. Nevertheless the surfaces of the modelled images give us in the imagination of the pleasure of touch and this tactile value continues to exist in many of such representative standing monuments as of today even after the lapse of more than two hundred years. The visual quality is still preserved and our passion and interest in appreciation is never eleminated.

As we have already observed there is an organic unity of line in such sculptural works, which again is similar to that of painting. And by line we mean not only the lines of the surface, but those made by the planes in which the figures lie and by pose and attitude. The predominance of a single type of line, the union of many to form a single continuous line, balance and symmetry, proportion of length and parallelism are all to be found in such sculptural works. Especially important is rhythm— the harmonious and balanced movement of lines. An equilibrium is established among all such aspects depending upon the capability of the concerned artist or craftsman and therefore certain deviations are also observed in a number of cases. However the equilibrium was not also a rigid one and the figures moving in undulating lines are sometimes exposed to irregular movement or balance, which are intended for imparting additional grace within a total unity.

The artists or craftsmen took beauty as the basis of their works and remodelled the objects by the elimination of details or by selection and emphasis on poses in order that purer effects might be obtained. All such conventionalization was in interest of increased beauty of line. The sacrifice of the natural contours in certain cases caused lifelessness that cannot be atoned for by any formal beauty.

The simplification of line in this art is a matter not only of lines within the whole and of single coutours, but of the total visual form of the whole, of silhouette and volume. Though apparently three dimensional, the sculptures cast a two dimensional image on the retina. The works are simple, clear and pleasing and capable of being grasped as a whole irrespective of details. Despite such fact, it is worthwhile mentioning here that the vivid appreciation of volume in many such works are not possible as the artists on a few occasions failed to simplify this aspect of the works. In absence of the same particularly at the later stage of the art practices in the nineteenth century AD, there had been disturbing visual clarity or bluntness due to irregular concentration of volumes.

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As a matter of fact, the terracotta panels of sculptures denoted the purpose of the aesthetic semblance of life not a mere substitute of life. It awakened the reactions appropriate to life and attainment of beauty in the medium of clay on certain occasions sacrificed something of exactness in rendering of shape. But its subtlety did not diminish its imporatance or its effect upon our feelings. It makes all the difference between a mere imitation of nature and a work of art, charming and compelling. We do not need to recognize its existence explicity in order to appreciate it; yet, as soon as our attention is called to it, we admit it and accord to it that rare inflence which before was felt, but nameless.

The medium of baked clay does not have the depth and intensity of the traditional medium of metal, coldness, clarity or serenity like stone. But the usual small size of the terracotta subjects was appropriate for the genre subjects which are so frequently represented by the Bengali artisans, that we find every ground to treat the material more earthly than any other medium else.

There is yet one peculiarity with regard to such sculptured images exhibited on the spaces permitted by the architectural edifices. The panels or plaques of the depicted images are always part of a larger whole within which the same existed in relation to the other things. However the space for such craftworks is of course a represented or imaginary space distinguishable from the real space of the temple architecture. The frames or outlines are appearing as if they are sister arts which cuts off the ideal space with their practical and social attitudes into the realm of imagination.

The artworks are sufficiently unified representing several individuals united by some common interest or by participation in some common actions. The unity of the objects is expressed through a unity in the material of representation, i,e, Baked clay. We also find combination of materials in a few temple decorations, to say stone flakes cum terracotta and terracotta cum stucco. Such a combination of materials gives the impression of two things juxtaposed, not a single whole. We find that through the difference in materials, potrayal of real difference in objects as well as consistency in principle is never achieved. The same therefore stands for a sheer agglomeration. We further observe that when several figures in a group is represented, we cannot find real empty space among them keeping them apart. However the spiritual or dramatic oneness created in the execution of the objects is intended for exhibiting that the figures belonging together.

The background introduced within the panel of terracotta sculptures on the temple architectures is not found to be detailed and there in fact exists little scope to show any clearness of outlines. The contours appear to be melted together with the block. One of the major factors leading to such a situation is constraint due to inadequacy of supporting space within the miniaturized edifices. In a haste to accommodate as many modelled figures as are possible there is a diminished emphasis on clearness of forms, though precision of modelling is generally maintained. Nevertheless whatever background is available, the same served the purpose of bringing the figures together and providing a material bond among them. Between the relief and the modelled figures or

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sculptures in the round there is a sort of compromise. In such similar works, there is a representation of perspective, the figures seeming to lie behind each other, flatter and smaller in order to indicate distance.

True sculptural vision as per definitions given by the Western aestheticians are found to be lacking in the terracotta sculptural panels in the core of Bengal traditions. The virtuosity in modelling however appears largely in the contemporary art. It is not deniable that despite such purported limitations, there is no reproduction of inharmonious lines in relation to other lines in the total works and there is a natural grace diverting attention of the worshipper viewers. No one can dogmatically assert that the lack of such purported true sculptural vision has crippled the art in the context of any aesthetic judgment. The Bengali artists were competent enough in harmonizing meticulously the objects of expression, enhancing the given purity and expressiveness of the material and created beauty of forms overlaying the repellence of the subjects. They have in the process asserted that the expression of inner life is subordinate to the expression of corporal beauty, but by any means preserved the complete unity between the inner and outer beauty. In potraying even the divinities, the beauties of soul and body tended to fall apart, making them expressive of broad and typical human emotions. Profound qualities have however been expressed, for dignity, poise, intelligence, sorrow, and active joy, which are tangible gains of the art practices of the late mediaeval Bengal evident in the innumerable series of artworks on temples withstanding the ravages of time and space.

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APPENDICE–A

LIST OF LATE MEDIAEVAL BRICK TEMPLES WITH TERRACOTTA DECORATIONS

Bangladesh

Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Dt. Kusthia			
Ballavpur	Seven Siva Temples	Early 17th Cent. AD	Since Dilapidated
Khorshedpur	Gopinath Temple	Early 19th Cent. AD	Atchala
Goswami Durgapur	Radharaman Temple	1674 AD	Porch
Baradi	Terracotta Math	18th Cent.	Sikhar/Rekha.
Phulbari	Math	17th Cent.	Sikhar/Rekha.
Dt. Khulna			
Chhaigharia	Sivamandir	1818 AD	Atchala
Kodla, Bagerhat	Ajodhya Math	17th Cent AD	Sikhar/Rekha
Gopalpur/Shyamnagar	Gobinda Temple	17th Cent AD	Navaratna
Maheswarpasa	Siva Temple	18th Cent AD	Jora-Bangla.
Nalta Kaliganj (Satkhira)	Krishna Temple	18th Cent Ad	Rekha
Dhulgram	Raghunathjiu Temple	18th Cent AD	Atchala
Satkhira	Annapurna Temple	1848 AD	Nabaratna
Sonabaria (Satkhira)	Shyamsunder Temple	1767 AD	Nabaratna
Damreli	Nabaratna Temple	1682 AD	Nabaratna
Dt. Dacca			
Laskardighiparh	Siva Temple	18th Cent	Chandni
Purua, Munshiganj	Siva Temple	18th Cent	Ek Bangla
Sonarang Tangibari	Siva Temple	1877-82 AD	Sikhara
Sribati Thear	Siva Temple	1847 AD	Sikhara
Dt. Dinajpur			
Astanar	Kantaji Temple	1704-22 AD	Navaratna
Kaharol			
Gopalganj	Prangopal Temple	1743-44 AD	Pancharatna
	Rashmancha	1754 AD	Pancha Bingshatiratna

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Hargovindapur Khandakhui	Darga	18th Cent	Do chala
Pabna			
Handiyal	Jagannath Temple	17th Cent AD	Rekha
Chatmohar	Sether Bangla	1779 AD	Ek Bangla
Hati Kumrul Ulapara	Siva Temple	18th Cent AD	Navaratna
Pabna	Gopinath	1607 AD	Jor-Bangla
	Radhagovinda Temple		
Potajia Shahajadpur	Radhaballava Temple	1700 AD	Navaratna
Taras	Gopal Temple	1730 AD (app)	Chandni
	Kapileswar Temple	1690 AD	Charchala
Dignagar	Raghabeswar Temple	1669 AD	Charchala
Dt. Faridpur			
Kaichhal Danga	Narayana Temple	18th Cent AD	Ek Bangla
Khalia, Gopalganj	Rajaram Temple	18th Cent AD	Chandni
Mathurapur	Deul	17th Cent AD	Rekha (Octagonal)
Nalia, Baliakandi	Jaidurga Temple	18th Cent AD	Charchala
Nani Kashir, Mukshudpur	Gopalganj Temple	18th Cent AD	Navaratna
Ujani Mukshudpur	Math	17th Cent AD	Charchala
Dt. Jessore/Jhinaidaha			
Iswaripur	Chanda Bhairav Temple	16th Cent. AD.	Triangular
Chanchra	Shyamrai Temple	1696 AD	At chala
Dhulgram Abhaynagar	Gopinath Temple	1749 AD	Jor Bangla
Muhammadpur	Krishna Temple	1866 AD	Jor Bangla
Itna, Lohagara	Math	1618 AD	Charchala
Jessore	Siva Temple	1782 AD	At chala
Kanainagar Muhammadpur	Krishna Balaram Temple	1703 AD	Jor Bangla
Kotakul Lohagara	Gobinda Temple	1732 AD	Ek Bangla
Lohagara	Krishna Temple	1749 AD	Ek Bangla
Mohammadpur	Harekrishna Temple	1704 AD	Octagonal
,,	Laxmi Narayan Temple	1704 AD	Octagonal
Murali	Sivamandir	1782 AD	Atchala
Naldanga, Jhinaidah	Ganesh Temple	1680 AD	Charchala
,,	Gopalbari Temple	1722 AD	Ek Bangla
,,	Siddheswari Temple	Late 17th Cent	Pancharatna

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Naldanga, Jhinaidah	Mahadev Temple	1733 AD	Pancharatna
,,	Rajeswari Temple	1798 AD	Atchala
,,	Siva Temple	1745 AD	Charchala
,,	Taranath Siva Temple	18th Cent AD	Octagonal
Nanduali, Magura	Siva Temple	1733 AD.	Charchala
Raigram Lohagara	Narayana Temple	Early 18th Cent	Jor Bangla
,,	Siva Temple	1724 AD	Charchala
Rainagar, Sripur	Krishna Temple	1788 AD	Charchala
Salnagar, Lohagara	Dolmancha	early 18th Cent	Pancharatna
,,	Govinda Temple	18th Cent AD	Jor Bangla
Satrajitpur Magura	Madanmohan Temple	1698 AD	Chanchala
Telkupi	Ganganath Siva Temple	1740 AD	Atchala
Dt. Bagura/Jaipurhat			
Jugir Bhavan, Kahalu	Kala Bhairava	1766 AD	Charchala
Jaipurhat	Siva Temple	18th Cent AD	Rekha
Dt. Barishal			
Madhabpasa	Katyayani Temple/Math	18th Cent AD	Ek Chala
Mahilara Gaurnadi	Math	18th Cent AD	Octagonal
Jhat Kathi	Siva Temple	18th Cent Ad	Octagonal
Dt. Mymensingh			
Kishorganj	Laxmi Janardan Temple	18th Cent AD	Ek bingshati Ratna
Kashipur Rajbari	Deul	18th Cent AD.	Octagonal
Dt. Rangpur			
Bardhankuti, Gobindaganj	Rashmancha	18th Cent AD.	Navaratna
,,	Sarbamangala Temple	Late 17th Cent	Ek Bangla
,,	Siva Temple	18th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Dhamseni	Siva Temple	1633 AD.	Chandni
Ulipur, Dimla	Kali Temple	18th Cent AD	Octagonal
Dt. Rajshahi/Nawgah			
Talihar	Siva Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Octagonal with Lotus dome
Natore	Siva Temple	1823 AD	Octagonal
Putiah	Sandhya Mandir	18th Cent AD	Ek Bangla
do	Siva Mandir	do	Charchala
do	Gobinda Mandir	do	Pancharatha Rekha

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Putiah	Radhakanta Temple	1895 AD	Chandani
do	Ratha Temple	18th Cent	Charchala
do	3 Siva Temples	1823 AD	EK Bangla
Shiroul Paba	Siva Temple	18th Cent	Octagonal
West Bengal			
Nadia			
Shantipur (Matiganj Bejpara)	Jaleswar Siva Temple	Early 18th Cent	Charchala
Shantipur	Shyamchand Temple	1726 AD	At chala.
"	Jadaveswar Temple	1863 AD	At chala.
"	Madhabeswar Temple	1863 AD	At chala
"	Gokulchand Temple	1740 AD	At chala
"	Ramchandra Temple	Late 18th Cent	Chandni
Dignagar	Raghabeswar Temple	1669 AD	Charchala
"	Siva Temple	1669 AD	Charchala
Matiari	Rudreswar Siva Temple	1665 AD	Jor Bangla
Dogachi	Siva Temple	Early 18th Cent	Charchala
Bimagar	Radhakrishna Temple	1694 AD	Jor-Bangla
"	Vishnu Temple	1669 AD	Charchala
Ghorai Khetra, Kaliganj	Shyamrai Temple	1710 AD (App)	Do Chala
Tehatta	Krishna Roy Temple	1678 AD	Jor Bangla
Bagachra	Brahmashasan Siva Temple	1665 Ad	At Chala
Bahirgachi	Siva Temple	18th Cent AD	Charchala
Bilwa-Pushkarini, Dhubulia	Siva Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	At chala
Mrigi, Tehatta	Siva Temple	1767 AD	Charchala
North 24 Parganas			
Tentulberia (Gaighata)	Siva Temple of Pradhan family	1790AD	Pancharatna
Ichhapur	Gobindajiu Temple	Early 19th Cent	Navaratna
Bhatpara	Jora Shivmandir (Thakurpara)	1807 AD (app)	Navaratna
Bhatpara	Jora Shivmandir (Badhadanga ghat)	1724 AD	At chala
Kanchrapara	Krishna Roy Temple	1785 AD	At chala
Halishahar	Nand Kishore Temple	1743 AD	At chala

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Dt. South 24 Parganas			
Bishnupur Gobindapur	Siva Temple	1769 AD	At chala
Ramnathpur (Mandir Bajar)	Keshabeswar Temple	1748 AD	At chala
Barisha Sabarnapara	12 Siva Temples	Early 19th Cent AD	At chala
Jainagar	Radhaballav Temple	18th Cent	At chala
Dakshin Barasat	2 Siva Temples	1799 & 1807 AD	At chala
Uttar Kamarpol, Dimond harbour	Radhakanta Temple and Dolmancha	1769 AD (app)	At chala
Bawali, Alipur	Abandoned Siva Temple	Late 18th Cent	Charchala
	Gopinath Jiu Temple	1794 AD	Navaratna
Dt. Ultar/Dakshin Dinajpur			
Bindol (Raiganj)	Bhairavi Temple	17th Cent AD	Rounded domed
Khanpur (Balurghat)	Simhavahini Temple	17th Cent AD	Deul
Bhikahar (Tapan)	Kali Temple	18th Cent AD	Charchala
Mahur Kismat (Gangarampur)	Abandoned Temple	19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Dt. Dhanbad (Jharkand)			
Dumra	Rashmancha	19th Cent AD	Navaratna (octagonal)
Dt. Murshidabad			
Bhattamati (Nabagram)	Siva Temple (Ratneswar)	1750 AD (app)	Pancharatna
Gobarhati (Kandi)	Brindabanchandra Temple	1772 AD (app)	Pancharatna
Panchthupi	Siva Temple	1770 AD (app)	Navaratna Sikhara-Pancharatha
Barnagar (Azimganj)	Gangeswar Siva Temple	1745-50 AD	Jor Bangla.
do	Ratneswar Siva	1741 AD	Ek Bangla (4 temples)
do	Bhabaniswar Siva Temple	1745 Ad	Octagonal
do	Kali Temple	1740 AD	Ek Bangla
Byaspur, Cossimbazar	Keshabeswar Siva Temple	1815 AD	Inverted Lotus dome
Sadpur (Barwah)	Abandoned Temple	Late 18th Cent	Charchala
Jugsara (Barwah)	Siva Temple	Early 19th Cent	Pancha ratna
Kagram (Bharatpur)	Jora Siva Temple	Early 19th Cent	Sikhara
Baghdanga (Kandi)	Suryeswar Temple	Late 18th Cent	Ek Bangla
Purulia			
Baghmandi	Rasmancha	19th Cent Ad	Navaratna (Rekha)

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Mayurbhanj (Orissa)			
Haripurgarh	Rasikrai Temple	1575 AD	Atchala
Hooghly			
Aknapur (Tarakeswar)	Abandoned Temple (Kundu Family)	1760 AD	Atchala
	Raghunath Temple (Mullick family)	1760 AD	Atchala
Bansberia (Hooghly)	Ananta Vasudeva Temple	1679 AD	Atchala
Khamarpara (Bansberia)	2 Siva Temples	18th Cent AD	Navaratna
,,	Siva Temples	18th. Cent AD	Atchala
Guptipara (Balagarh)	Ramachandra Temple	18th Cent AD	Charchala (Sikhara)
,,	Vrindabanchandra Temple	18th Cent AD	Atchala
,,	Chaitanyadev Temple	18th Cent AD	Jor Bengla
Sripat Antpur (Jangipara)	Radhagobinda Jiu Temple	1786 AD	At chala
Baichigram (Pandua)	Radhamadhab Temple	1632 AD	Rekha
do	Dolmancha	1755 AD	Rekha
do	Sorash (16) deuls	1715-27	Rekha (Saptaratha)
Bhadreswar (Paikpara)	Ram Sita Temple	18th Cent AD	Navaratna
Krishnapur (Polba)	Old temple (Ghosh family)	1762 AD	Atchala
Bhagabatipur (Chanditala)	Five Siva Temples including Malai Chand Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Atchala
Srirampur	Radhaballavjiu Temple	1655 AD	Atchala
Baligari (Tarakeshwar)	Sitala Temple	18th Cent AD	Atchala
Jainagar (Tarakeshwar)	2 Siva Temple	1740-43 AD	Atchala
Shyampur (Tarakeshwar)	2 Siva Temple	18th Cent AD	Atchala
Ghoragari (Pandua)	Gopaljiu Temple	1679 AD	Atchala
Chandhati (Pandua)	Siva Temple	Late 18th Cent	Atchala
Dwarhatta (Haripal)	Dwarikachandi Temple	1764 AD	Atchala
do	Raj Rajeshwar Temple	1829 AD (app)	Atchala
Gurap (Dhaniakhali)	Nandlaljiu Temple and 3 other Temples	1760 AD	Atchala
do	Dolmancha	18th Cent AD	Rekha
Khanakul (Krishnagar)	Radhaballavjiu Temple	18th Cent Ad	Atchala
do	Gopinathjiu Temple	1774 AD	Navaratna
Digsui (Mogra)	Jadav Roy Temple	1792 AD	Navaratna
Rajbalhat (Jangipara)	Radhakantajiu Temple (Ghatak family)	1733 AD	Atchala
do	Sridhar Damodar Temple (Sil family)	1724 AD	Atchala
do	Damodar Temple (Dutta family)	1723 AD	Pancharatna

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Rajbalhat (Jangipara)	Sitaram Temple (Chakraborty family)	1733 AD	Atchala
Somra Sukharia (Balagarh)	Jagadhatri Temple	1754 AD	Navaratna
do	Ananta Bhairav Temple	1813 AD	Pancha Bingshati Ratna
Bahirgarh (Krishnanagar)	Damodar Temple	1685 AD	Atchala
Haripal	Radhagobinda Temple	1654 AD	Atchala
do	Sitaram Temple	1736 AD	Atchala
do	Kali Temple	1742 AD	Atchala
do	Siva Temple (Ray family)	Mid 19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
do	Siva Temple (Bardhaman Raj family)	do	Atchala
do	Jora Shiva Tample (Bhar family)	do	Atchala
Arambagh	Laxmi Janardan Temple (Ramnagar)	1741 AD	Atchala
do	Gangadhar Shiva Temple (Gourhati)	1752 AD	Atchala
do	Vishalakshi Temple (Eloma)	1733 AD	Atchala
Dihibatpur (Parsura)	Shiva Temple	1756 AD	Pancharatna
Dasghara (Dhania Khali)	Gopinath Temple	1729 AD	Pancharatna
Harirampur (Jangipara)	i) Siva Temple	1738 AD	Atchala
	ii) Siva Temple	1802 AD	Navaratna
Bally Dewanganj (Goghat)	1) Durga Temple	19th Cent AD	Jora Bangla
	2) Siva Temple (Dalalpara)	1747 AD	Pancharatna
	3) Damodar Temple (Dalalpara)	18th Cent AD	Atchala
	4) Rashmancha (Palpara)	19th Cent AD	Octagonal
Swaluk (Parsura)	Gopinath Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Baijhati (Chanditala)	Old Siva Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Koyapat (Goghat)	Sridhar Temple (Mondal family)	1807 AD	Navaratna
Mamudpur (Goghat)	Vishnu Temple	1806 AD	Pancharatna
Ilchhoba (Pandua)	1) Siva Temple (Bandopadhya family)	Late 18th Cen AD	Barochala
	2) Siva Temple (Ghosh family)	1726 AD	Atchala
	3) Siva Tample (Das family)	19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
	4) Vishnu Temple (Bandopadhayay family)	19th Cent AD	Pancharatna

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Bhangamora (Parsura)	Sitala Temple	19th Cent AD	Atchala
do	Abandoned Temple	do	Pancharatna
Lakshmipur (Arambagh)	Abandongd Temple (Adhikary family)	1840 AD	Pancharatna
	do	1850 AD	Atchala
Badanganj (Goghat)	Damodar Temple	1810 AD	Navaratna
do	Sridharlalji Temple	1806 AD	Chandni
Baikunthapur (Parsura)	Sridhar Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Navaratna
Chandannagar	Buroshib Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Navaratna
Sahaganj Khamarpara (Chuchura)	i) Siva Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	do
	ii) Siva Temple	do	Pancharatna
	iii) Abandond Temple	1725 AD	Atchala
Kankarkuli (Dhaniakhali)	i) Old Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Octagonal Rekha
	ii) Dolmancha	1755AD	Rekha
Harinakhali (Parsura)	Dharmaraj Temple	Late 19th Cent AD	Charchala
Udairajpur (Goghat)	Damodar Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Charchala
Kamarpukur (Goghat)	Vishnu Temple	19th Cent AD	Chandni
Kamarchak (Khanakul)	Dolmancha	19th Cent AD	Atchala
Talchinan (Dadpur)	Dolmancha	1792 AD	Pamcharatna
Gourhati (Arambagh)	i. Dolmancha	19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
	ii. Gangadhar Shiva Temple	1752 AD	Atchala
Sripur (Balagarh)	Jora Siva Temple	19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Gurbari (Dhaniakhali)	Radhagobinda Temple	1789 AD	Atchala
Somaspur (Dhaniakhali)	Siva Temple (Mukhopadhyay family)	19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Boragari (Pandua)	Gopal Temple (Tambuli family)	1679 AD	Atchala
do	Abondoned Temple (Tambuli Family)	1812 AD	Rekha
Chopa (Dhaniakhali)	Siva Temple (Majumder Family)	19th Cent	Pancharatna
do	Siva Temple (Majumder family)	19th Cent	Atchala
Hazipur (Dhaniakhali)	i) Gopal Temple	1783 AD	Atchala
	ii) Shiva Temple	19th Cent	Atchala
Kalimba (Arambagh)	i) Siva Temple (Laha family)	1773 AD	Atchala
	ii) Siva Temple (Abandonad)	1798 AD	Atchala

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Dt. Bankura			
Bishnupur	Shyamrai Temple	1643 AD	Pancharatna
do	JoraBangla (Kestorai) Temple	1655 AD	Jor Bangla
do	Madanmohan Temple	1694 AD	Ek ratna
do	Radhabinod Temple (Kharbangla)	1659 AD	Atchala
do	Sridhara Temple (Salagram)	Late 17th Cent AD	Navaratna
do	Rashmancha	1600 AD	Planiroof (Pyramidal)
do	Chinmoyee Temple (Kodakudipara)	18th Cent	Ek ratna
Balshi (Patrasayer)	Laxminarayan Temple (Majkuripara)	1652 AD	Atchala
do	Shiva Temple (Pubpara)	Late 18th Cent	Atchala
do	Vishnu Temple (Pubpara)	Late 18th Cent AD	Sikhara
do	Shyamsundar Temple	Early 18th Cent AD	Pancharatna
do	Rama Temple	Early 18th Cent AD	Atchala
Bhogalpur (Kotalpur)	Krishnaraijiu Temple	1793 AD	Atchala
Birsingha (Patrasayar)	Brindabanchandra Temple/ /Raghunath Temple	1638 AD	Pancharatna
do	Radhamadavjiu Temple	1855 AD	Navaratna
Maynapur (Jaipur)	Radhadamodar Temple	1844 AD	Pancharatna
Muktatore (Barjora)	Narugopal Temple	1803 AD	Chandni
Metyalya (Gangajalghati)	Laxminarayan Temple	1714 AD	Pancharatna
Rautkhand (Jaipur)	Abandoned Pancharatna Temple	1714 AD	Pancharatna
Rajgram (Jaipur)	Girigobardhan Temple	1825-30 AD	Chandni
do	Rashmancha	19th Cent AD	Saptadeshratna
Rajagram (Bankura)	Sridhara Temple	19th Cent AD	Navaratna
do	Salgram Temple (Srirampurpara)	19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Sonamukhi	Sridhara Temple (Bajarpara)	1845 AD	Panchabingshati Ratna
do	Siva Temple (Chandrapara)	1835 AD	Sikhara
Hadalnarayanpur (Patrasayer)	Gangagobinda Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Navaratna
	Damodar Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Navaratna
do	Abandoned Temple	do	Atchala
do	annex to Damodar		

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Hadalnarayanpur (Patrasayer)	Radhadamodar Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Navaratna
do	Rashmancha	do	Saptadasratna
Akui (Indus)	Radhakantajiu Temple	1761-64	Pancharatna
Indus-			
Bajarpara	Narayan Temple	18th Cent AD	Chandni
Krishnahatipara	Radhadamodar Temple	1749 AD	Navaratna
Kadasole (Barjora)	Bishnu Temple	1805-10 AD	Pancharatna
Patrasayer	Siva Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Pancharatha Deul
do	Ram Raghubir Temple	do	Atchala
Bakadaha (Bishnupur)	Radhadamodar Temple	1661 AD	Atchala
Bamira (Patrasayar)	Siva Temple (Dakshinpara)	Late 18th Cent AD	Navaratna
Bankura (Pathakpara)	Raghunathjiu Temple	1639 AD	Chandni
	Radhaballav Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Navaratna
Temples with mixed terracotta/stucco ornamentations			
Jibta (Kotulpur)	Damodar Temple	1833AD	Pancharatna
Kotulpur-Bhadrapara	Sridhar Temple	1833AD	Pancharatna
do	Girigobardhan Temple	Early 19th Cent	Pancharatna
Kotulpur Benepara	Damodar Temple	do	Navaratna
Kotulpur Purbapara	Bishnu Temple	do	Pancharatna
Chhatna	Bashulidevi Temple	1873 AD	Pancharatna
Patrasayer	Kali Temple	Mid 19th Cent AD	Chandni
	Chandan tala Salgram	do	Atchala
Dongalon (Indus)	Radhaballavjiu Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Atchala
Paharpur (Indus)	Sridhar Temple	Mid 19th Cent	Pancharatna
Dt Bardhaman			
Kulingram (Jamalpur)	Gopeswara Siva Temple	1744 AD	Atchala
Jaugram (Jamalpur)	Radhakanta Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Atchala
	Shiva Temple (Dakshnipara)	do	do
do	Raghunathdev Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	,,
do	Jora Sivamandir	Early 19th Cent AD	,,
do	Durga Temple	Mid 19th Cent AD	,,
do	Radhakrishna	Late 18th Cent AD	,,
do	Temple (Kodalpara)	Late 18th Cent AD	,,
Shusuna (Manteshwar)	Siva Temple	Late 17th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Singi (Katwa)	Siva Temple	1824 AD	Navaratna
Kanchannagar (Burdwan)	Siva Temple	Early 19th Cent	Jora Bangla

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Amaragarh (Ausgram)	Narayan Temple	Mid 18th Cent	Panchratna
Mankar (Galshi)	Radhaballav Temple	1727 AD	Navaratna
	Deuleswar Temple (Raipur)	Early 19th Cent	Sikhara
,,	Siva Temple (Bhattacharjee para)	Early 19th Cent	,,
,,	Siva Temple (Dutta Family, Raypara)	,,	Pancharatna
	Jora Siva Temple (Biswas family)	,,	Rekha (Octagonal)
Debipore (Memari)	Laxmi Janardan Tample	1844 AD	Pancharatna
Satgachia (Memari)	Dolmancha (Goswami family)	18th Cent AD	Octagonal (Since dilapidatad)
do	Sivhavahini Temple	17th Cent AD	Atchala (since damaged)
Amadpur (Memari)	Gopala Temple	1572 AD	Rekha
	Siva Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Jorbangla
Bajira (Memari)	Lakshimi Janardan Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Atchala
Sridharpur (Memari)	Sridhara Temple (Sarkar family)	18th Cent AD	Atchala
Bahabpur (Memari)	Shyam Sundar Temple	1765 AD	Atchala
Bara Palsan (Memari)	Siva Temple	18th Cent AD	Atchala
Karuri (Memari)	Siva Temple	18th Cent AD	Atchala
Bhandardihi (Memari)	Siva Temple	18th Cent AD	Atchala
Ambika Kalna	Siddheswari Temple	1740 AD	Jor Bangla
	Annexed Siva Temple	1747-64 AD	
	Pratapeswar Siva Temple	1849 AD	Sikhar
	Gopeswar Siva Temple	1766 AD	Panchavingsati Ratna
	Pancheswar Siva Temple	1758 AD	Chandni
	Laljiu Temple	1739 AD	Pancha Vingsati Ratra
	Krishnachandra Temple	1751 AD	do
	Ananta Vashudeb Temple	1754 AD	Atchala
	Rupeswar Temple	1765 AD	Chandni
Mulgram (Memari)	Lakshminarayanjiu Temple	1692 AD	Atchala
Baidyapur (Kalna)	Abandoned Temple	1598 AD	Rekha
	Siva Temple (Nandy family)	1802 AD	Atchala
	Madan Mohan Temple	18th Cent AD	Ek Bangla
	Krishna Temple	1598 AD	Twin Deul Rekha
	Rashmancha	1755 AD AD	Navaratna
Dogachia (Purbasthali)	Gopinath Temple	1654 AD	Atchala
Sadipur (Jamalpur)	Madan Mohan Temple (Mitra Family)	18th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Bakati (Kanksa)	Siva Temple	1832 AD	Pancharatna
Ukhra (Andal)	Siva Temple	1836 AD	Rekha
Kalikapur (Ausgram)	Jora Siva Temple	1839 AD	Rekha
Bara Bainan (Rayna)	Siva Temple (Hattala)	18th Cent	Pancharatna
Sri Bati (Katwa)	Bholanath Siva Temple	1836 AD	Pancharatna
			Ridged Rekha
	Sankara Siva Temple	1836 AD	Octagonal Ridged Rekha
	Raghunathbari	19th Cent	Double Storied Chandni (Rekha)

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Putsuri (Manteswar)	Jora Siva Temple	Late 18th Cent	Rekha
Ramchandrapur (Bhatar)	Siva Temple (Mukherjee Family)	19th Cent AD	Atchala
Gantar (Memari)	Chandi Temple	19th Cent AD	Charchala
Bonpash (Bhatar)	Buro Siva Temple	18th Cent AD	Rekha
Sitahati (Ketugram)	Siva Temple	1760 AD	Sikhara
Orgram (Bhatar)	Jora Siva Temple	19th Cent AD	Rekha
Kaigram (Manteshwar)	Varaha Vishnu Temple	Early 18th Cent	JorBangla
Hatgobindapur	Sridhara Temple	18th Cent AD	Atchala
(Bardhaman)	Astanayika Durga	18th Cent AD	Atchala
	Siva Temple (Main Road)	19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Panchkhya (Memari)	Abandoned Temple	1717 AD	Atchala
Basatpur (Memari)	Jora Siva Temple	1741 AD	Atchala
Suhari (Bardhaman)	Raj Rajeswara Temple	1796 AD	Atchala
	Siva Temple	Late 18th Cent	Atchala
Gram Kulti (Kalna)	Siva Temple (Sil family)	1793 AD	Atchala
	Siva Temple (Nandi family)	1760 AD	Atchala
Dainhat (Katwa)	Siva Temple	18th Cent AD	Charchala
	Abandoned Siva Temple	Mid 18th Cent	Atchala
Barar (Memari)	Siva Temple (Kalitala)	17th AD	Atchala
Sankari (Khandaghosh)	Siva Temple (Dakshinpara)	1761 AD	Atchala
	Simhavahini Temple	1762 AD	Pancharatna
	Govinda Temple (Mazumder family)	1673 AD	do
Bahadurpur (Ausgram)	Raghunath Temple (Banerjee family)	18th Cent AD	Atchala
	Raghunath Temple (Nayak family)	18th Cent AD	Chandni
	Mangalchandi Temple (Mukherjee family)	19th Cent AD	Chandni
Simasimi (Galsi)	Rameswara Temple	19th Cent AD	Atchala
Palasi (Bardhaman)	Burosiva Temple	1782 AD	Atchala
Khandaghosh	Siva Temple (Roy Para)	1795 AD	Atchala
Bikrampore (Galsi)	Jora Siva Temple	Late 18th Cent	Atchala
Masagram (Jamalpur)	Praneswar Temple	18th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Begat (Memari)	Chandi Temple	18th Cent AD	Pancharatna

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Sarpi (Faridpur)	Gopala Temple	19th Cent AD	Navaratna
Gopalpur (Bardhaman)	Sridhara Temple (Sarkar family)	18th Cent AD	Navaratna
Gotan (Rayna)	Old Vishalkshi Temple	19th Cent AD	Navaratna
Panchra (Jamalpur)	2 Siva Temples (Bhattacharjee family)	19th Cent AD	Atchala Octagonal
Bamanpara (Bardhaman)	Radhagobinda Temple	1745 AD	Chandni
Baghnapara (Kalna)	Krishna Balaram	18th Cent AD	Charchala porch.
Kuchut (Memari)	Lakshmi Narayan Temple	19th Cent AD	Navaratna
do	Dolmancha (Purbapara)	19th Cent AD	Ridged Rekha
Bijurh (Memari)	Dolmancha (Goswami family)	19th Cent AD	Rekha
Barsul (Bardhaman)	Dolmancha of Krishna Balaram Temple	19th Cent AD	Charchala
Dt. Birbhum			
Angora (Nanur)	Shiva Temple (Bandopadhyay family)	Mid 19th Cent AD	Rekha
Adityapur (Bolpur)	Shiva Temple	1817 AD	Rekha
Itanda (Bolpur)	Kali Temple	Mid 19th Cent AD	Jor Bangla
	Siva Temple	1815 AD	Pancharatna
Ilambajar	Halkhola Mandir	Early 19th Cent AD	Octagonal (Roofallen)
	Lakshmi Janardan Temple (Bamunpara)	1846 AD	Pancharatna
	Shiva Temple (Bamunpara)	1846 AD	Rekha
Uchkaran (Nanur)	Four Siva Temples	1769 AD	Charchala
	Temple of Chand Raya	1768 AD	Chandni
Ghurisha (Ilambajar)	Raghunathjiu Temple Sri Gopal & Lakshmi	1633 AD	Charchala
	Janardan Temple	1838 AD	Navaratna
Nanur	Jora Siva Temples (Basuli Mandir compound)	19th Cent AD	Atchala
Chandanpur (Bolpur)	Siva Temple	1864 AD	Rekha
Charkalgram (Nanur)	Old Temple (Brahmanpara)	Mid 19th Cent AD	Navaratna
	Siva Temple (Chattopadhyaypara)	1838 AD	Pancharatna
Chhinpai (Dubrajpur)	Siva Temple	1759 AD	Pancharatna
Jaideb Kenduli (Ilambajar)	Sri Radhabinod Temple	1692AD	Navaratna
Jalandi (Nanur)	Siva Temple (Fouzdarpara)	Late 18th Cent AD	Atchala
	Old Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
	(Western part of the village)	Mid 19th Cent AD	Rekha
	do		

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Jubutia (Nanur)	Siva Temple	1728 AD	Charchala
Thupsara (Nanur)	Siva Temple	1833 AD	Sikhara
Daskalgram (Nanur)	Jora Siva Temple	Mid 18th Cent	Atchala
Dubrajpur	Siva Temple (Bajarpara)	1888 AD	Trayodasratna
	Siva Temple (Nayak family)	19th Cent	Navaratna
	Siva Temple (Mayrapara)	Mid 19th Cent	Rekha
	Pancha Siva Mandir (Namopara and ojhapara)	Mid 19th Cent	At the Centre Trayodasratna Surrounded by 4 Rekha Temples
	Siva Temple (Mudipara)	Mid 19th Cent	Trayodasratna
	Nandipukar Siva Temples	1867 AD	Rekha
Baliguni (Nanur)	2 Siva Temples (Paschimpara)	18th Cent AD	Atchala
Brahmandihi (Nanur)	Abandoned Temple	17th Cent AD	Navaratna
Perua (Khairasol)	Radhabinod Temple	1672 AD (app)	Chandni (2 storied)
Mehagram (Nalhati)	3 Siva Temples	Early 19th Cent	Charchala
Raipur (Suri)	Siva Temple	1773 AD	Atchala
	Jora Siva Temples	18th Cent AD	Charchala
Ramnagar (Mayureswar)	Siva Temple (Small)	1738 AD	Charchala
Serandi (Bolpur)	Siva Temple (Dharmatala)	1817 AD	Atchala
	Narayan Temple	19th Cent AD	Trayodasratna
	Jora Shiva Temple	1830 AD	Atchala
Suri	Govindeswar Temple	1876 AD	Rekha
	Kuladeswar Temple	1876 AD	Rekha
Supur (Bolpur)	1) Abandoned Temple (Lalbajar)	Early 19th Cent	Rekha Octagonal
	2) do	do	Rekha
	3) Siva Temple (Haltala)	1817 AD	Pancharatna
Surul (Bolpur)	1) Lakshmi Janardan Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
	2) Jora Siva Temples	1831 AD	Rekha
	3) Siva Temple (Paschimpara)	1861 Ad	Rekha
	4) Siva Temple (Purbapara)	1837 AD	Rekha
Hetampur (Dubrajpur)	Chandranath Siva Temple	1847 AD	Octagonal Pinnacled
	Dewanji Temple	19th Cent AD	Rekha
Dt. Howrah			
Amaragari (Amta)	Dadhimadhab Temple	1764 AD	Atchala
	Gajalakshmi Temple	1729 AD	Atchala
Asanda (Udainarayanpur)	Sridharjiu Temple	1789 AD	Navaratna

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Ichchanagari (Jagatballavpur)	Garhchandi Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Atchala
Ichhapur	i) Rashmancha	19th Cent AD	Rekha
(Jagatballavpur)	ii) Dolmancha (Gharapara)	Late 18th Cent AD	Pancharatna (Octagonal)
Orphuli (Bagnan)	Rashmancha (Maiti family)	Early 19th Cent AD	Octagonal
Kalyanpur (Bagnan)	Damodara Temple (Since Destroyed in 1978 flood)	1786 AD	Navaratna
Kumarpur (Jagatballavpur)	Rashmancha (Dwari family)	Early 19th Cent AD	Octagonal
Khalna (Amta)	Krishnaraijiu Temple	1685 AD	Atchala
	Khatteswar Siva	1738 AD	Atchala
Ganga (Udainarayanpur)	Damodarjiu Temple (Kolay family)	1788 AD	Navaratna
Ganeshpur (Shyampur)	Lakshmi Janardan Temple	1820 AD	Navaratna
Gazipore (Amta)	Gobindaraijiu Temple	18th Cent AD	Chandri
Garbalia (Jagatballavpur)	Bhubaneswar Shiva Temple	Mid 19th Cent	Atchala
Chongghurali (Jagatballavpur)	MadanMohanjiu Temple	1705 AD	Atchala
Jagatballavpur	Siva Temple (Pal family)	1763 AD	Atchala
	Siva Temple	1780 AD	Atchala
	(Kalitala bajar)	1780 AD	Atchala
	Siva Temple (Sasthitala)	1777 AD	Atchala
Jaipur (Amta)	Sridharjiu Temple	1784 AD	Atchala
	Matilal Dharmathakur Temple	1684 AD	Atchala
Jhikhira (Amta)	Sitaram Temple (Ghoshpara)	1700 AD	Atchala
	Sitanath Temple (Kararpara)	1783 Ad	Atchala
	Shyamsundari Jiu Temple (Madhyapara)	1691 AD	Atchala
	Damodar Jiu Temple (Paschimpara)	1776 AD	Atchala
	Jaichandi Devi Temple	1762 AD	Atchala

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
	Damodar Jiu Temple (Damaged-Mondal family)	1769 AD	Atchala
Dakshin Maju (Jagatballavpur)	Damodarjiu Temple (Kolaypara)	Mid 18th Cent AD	Atchala
Deulpur (Panchla)	Siva Tample (Ghosh family)	1880 AD	Barochala
Dhasa (Jagatballavpur)	Chandrachud Temple	1735 AD	Atchala
	Gopinathjiu Temple	1708 AD	Charchala
Nijabalia (Jagatballavpur)	Siva Temple	1776 AD	Atchala
Pero (Par Radhanagar-Udainarayanpur)	Jageswar Siva Temple	1791 AD	Chandni
	Viseswar Siva Temple	1791 AD	Atchala
	Hariswar Siva Temple	1819 AD	Atchala
	Sridharjiu Temple	1846 AD	Pancharatha Sikhara
Baruipur (Udainarayanpur)	Raghunath Siva Temple	1694 AD	Atchala
Basantapur (Amta)	Trilokeshwar Siva Temple	1752 AD	Atchala
Bakul (Jagatballavpur)	Siva Temple (Kaviraj family)	1759 AD	Atchala
	Siva Temple (Kharapara)	1760 AD	Atchala
Bhatora (Amta)	Jaleswar Siva Temple (Pal family)	Early 19th Cent	Atchala
Bhandargacha (Amta)	Gajalakshimi Temple	1785 AD	Atchala
Mahishamuri (Amta)	Bhubaneswari Temple (Ghosh family)	1679 AD	Atchala
Marghurali (Jagatballavpur)	Damodarjiu Rashmancha (Mondal family)	Late 18th Cent AD	Octagonal Rekha
Manikura (Amta)	Swayambhu Nara Madhab Siva Temple (Dwari family)	18th Cent AD	Atchala
Mellak (Bagnan)	Madangopaljiu Temple	1651 AD	Atchala
Jadupur (Jagatballavpur)	Dharmaraj Temple	Mid 18th Cent AD	Atchala
Rautara (Amta)	Sitaramjiu Temple (Ghosh family)	1700 AD	Atchala

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Rautara (Amta)	Damodarjiu Temple (Sarkarpara)	1762 AD	Atchala
do			
do	Dolmancha (Roy family)	18th Cent AD	Atchala
Radhapur (Shyampur)	Sridharjiu Temple (Samanta family)	Early 19th Cent	Atchala
Rameshwarpur (Jagatballavpur)	Siva Temple (Mitra family)	1746 AD	Atchala
Singti (Udainarayanpur)	LakshmiJanardanjiu Temple (Berapara)	1777 AD	Atchala
	Lakshminarayan Temple (Karpara)	18th Cent AD	Atchala
	Sitala Temple (Samantapara)	18th Cent AD	Atchala
Sultanpur (Shyampur)	Khatial Siva Temple	1666 AD	Charchala
Harali (Udainrayanpur)	Sridharjiu Temple (Maiti family)	Early 19th Cent AD	Atchala
Harishpur (Udainarayanpur)	Vastu Shiva temple (Samui family)	1841 AD	Pancharatha Sikhara
Midnapore— East & West **(Medinipur)**			
Ajuria (Daspur)	Lakshmijanardan Temple (Charanpara)	1870 AD	Navaratna
	Manasa Mandir (Saipara)	1869 AD	Charchala
	Sitala Mandir (Dakshinpara)	1826 AD	Rekha Saptaratha
Anandapur (Godapiyasal)	Radhakrishna & Damodar Temple	1868-69 AD	Pancharatna
	Raghunath Vishnu Temple (Terracotta & Stucco mixed)	1892 AD	Pancharatna
Alui (Ghatal)	Sri Radha Damodarjiu Temple	1859 AD	Navaratna
	Siva Temple	1867 AD	Atchala
	Sridharjiu Temple	1867 AD	Navaratna
Ilambajar (Chandrakona)	Radhagobinda Temple (Terracotta & Sticco mixed)	1869 AD	Pancharatna
Uttar Gobindapur (Daspur)	Bhubaneswar Siva Temple	1849 AD	Atchala
Uttar Dhaukhal (Daspur)	Sitala Temple	1889 AD	Pancharatna
Uttar Barh (Daspur)	Kshipteswari temple	1779 AD	Atchala
Kanasol (Keshpur)	Jhareswar Siva	1834 AD	Atchala
Kayta (Kharagpur)	Raghunathjiu temple	1804 AD	Pancharatna
Katan (Ghatal)	Sridhara Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Chandni
Kushpata Gobindapur (Ghatal)	Lakshmi Janardan Tample	Late 18th Cent AD	Navaratna
Krishnapur (Ghatal)	Simhavahini Temple	1877 AD	Navaratna

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Konnagar (Ghatal)	Simhavahini Temple & Jagmohan	Early 18th Cent AD	Charchala
	Brindabanchandra Temple (Gosaipara)	1791 AD	Navaratna
Kharkusuma (Garbeta)	Vishnu Temple (Chowdhury family)	Mid 19th Cent AD	Atchala
	Sridharjiu Temple (Pan family)	do	Atchala
Kshirpai (Chandrakona)	Sitalananda Siva (Hattala)	1839-40 AD	Atchala
	Radhadamodar & Sitala Temple (Dayalbajar)	1817 AD	Pancharatna
	Simhavahini Temple (Paharipara)	1746 AD	Chandni
	Abandoned Temple (Gayenpara)	Late 18th Cent AD	Chandni
	Kharakeshwar Siva	1861 AD	Atchala
Kharar (Ghatal)	Sitala Temple	19th Cent AD	Navaratna
	Sitaram Temple	19th Cent AD	Trayodas ratna
Khunberia (Garbeta)	Siva Temple	19th Cent AD	Atchala
Khorda-Bishnupur (Daspur)	Siva Temple	1848-49 AD	Pancharatna
Gangadaspur (Chandrakona)	Umapati Siva Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Atchala
Gambhirnagar (Ghatal)	Tulshimancha	1812 AD	Pancharatna
Garbeta	Lakshmijanardan Temple	Early 19th Cent	Ek Ratna
Garhmayna (Mayna)	Lokeshwar Siva Temple (Reconstructed on Utilisation of Terra-cottas from old temple)	Reconstructed in 1969 AD Original temple was stated to be of 19th Cent AD	Atchala
Gobardhanpur	Ratneshwar Siva	Late 18th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Gopalpur (Daspur)	Bhubaneshwar Siva	1795 AD	Atchala
	Gaganeswar Siva	1795 AD	Atchala
	Rashmancha	Same	Navaratna
Gobindanagar (Daspur)	Radhagobinda & Radharaman Temple	1781 AD	Pancharatna
Gobindapur (Paskura)	Taraknath Siva Temple	1881 AD	Atchala
Gobindapur (Chandrakona)	Siva Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Chandni
Gosai Bajar (Panskura)	Vishnu Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Gosaiberh (Panskura)	Radhaballav Temple	1727 AD	Pancharatna
Goura (Daspur)	Lakshmi Janardan Temple	1824 AD	Pancharatna
	Sridharjiu Rasmancha	1821 AD	Navaratna
Ghanshyambati (Daspur)	Radhakrishna Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Rekha (Saptaratha)
Ghoshpur (Keshpur)	Lakshmi Janardan Temple	Late 18th Cent	Pancharatna
Chauli (Ghatal)	Sridharjiu Temple	1798 AD	Panchratna
	Sitalananda Siva Temple	1809 AD	Atchala

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Chaipat (Daspur)	Radhagobinda Temple	19th Cent AD	Atchala
	Rajrajeswar Temple	1824 AD	Navaratna
Jagannath Mandir Chak (Midnapore)	Jagannath Mandir	1851 AD	Pancharatna
Jalchak (Pingla)	Ramchandra Temple	1817 AD	Pancharatna
	Radhakrishna Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Jalsara (Ghatal)	Jaleswar Temple (Buroshib)	Late 19th Cent AD	Barochala
Jaikrishnapur (Debra)	Dharmaraj Temple	1815 AD	Atchala
Jayantipur (Chandrakona)	Shyamchand Temple	1845 AD	Pancharatna
Jotmuri (Daspur)	Gangadhar Siva Temple	1828 AD	Atchala
Tamluk	Bargabhima Temple	Early 17th Cent AD	Charchala (Saptaratha)
Tilantapara (Sabang)	Janakiballav Temple	1811 AD	Pancharatna
Dalapatipur (Ghatal)	Sankarshan Radha damodar Temple	1725 AD	Navaratna
	Sridharjiu Temple	Mid 18th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Dandipur (Ghatal)	Raghunath Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Damodarpur (Ghatal)	Deul and annexed Jagmohan	Late 19th Cent AD	Rekha & Charchala
Daspur	Gopinath Temple	1716 AD.	Ek Ratna
	Lakshmi Janardan Temple	1791 AD	Pancharatna
	Kali Temple (Mamudpur)	18th Cent AD	Ek Ratna
	Dadhi Baman Temple	1846 AD	Pancharatna
	Tulshimancha (Bindadevi)	1853 AD	Pancharatna
Natuk Jaikrishnupur (Ghatal)	Sridharjiu Temple	Mid 19th Cent AD	Navaratna
Nabagram (Ghatal)	Simhavahini Temple	1709 AD	Pancharatna
Paikpari (Debra)	Simhavahini Temple	1770 AD	Pancharatna
Pingla	Siva Temple	1869AD	Rekha (Saptratha)
Purushottampur (Daspur)	Vrajkrishna Temple	1772 AD	Ek ratna
Purbagopalpur (Panskura)	Radhavinod Temple	1774 AD	Pancharatna
Bagrui (Keshpur)	LakshmiVaraha Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Navaratna
Badarh (Keshpur)	Jagannath Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Navaratna
Balikora (Daspur)	Sridharjiu Rashmancha	1852 AD	Navaratna
Baikunthapur (Daspur)	Madanmohan Temple	19th Cent AD	Ek ratna (Octagonal)
Brahmanabasan (Daspur)	Sridhara Temple	Late 19th Cent	Atchala
Bhattagram (Goaltore)	Damodara Temple	1866-67	Atchala
Malancha (Kharagpur)	Dakshinakali Temple	1712 AD	Atchala
Mangloi Shyamballavpur (Panskura)	Radhadamodar Temple	1859 AD	Pancharatna

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Shyamballavpur (Panskura)			
	Radhadamodar Rashmancha	1859 AD	Navaratna
Muksudpur (Khargpur)	Lakshmijanardan Temple	1821 AD	Navaratna
Mitrasenpur (Chandrakona)	Shantinath Siva Temple	1828 AD	Navaratna
Raghunathpur (Daspur)	Shyamsunder Temple	1822 AD	Pancharatna
Raghunathpur (Chandrakona)	Abandoned Temple (Bardhan Family)	18th Cent AD	Roof fallen
Raghunath Bari (Garbeta)	Raghunath Temple	Early 18th Cent AD	Navaratna
Rajnagar (Panskura)	Jhareswer Temple	Late 18th Cent	Rekha (Ekadashratha)
Rabidaspur (Daspur)	Krishna Balaram Temple	19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Ranapur (Daspur)	Raghunath Temple	1801AD	Navaratna
Radhakantapur (Daspur)	Gopinath Temple	Late 18th Cent Renovated in 1872	Ek Ratna
	Raghunath Temple	1846 AD	Pancharatna
Ranagarh (Binpur)	Kalachand Temple	1855-56	Saptadasratna
Ramchandrapur (Mayna)	Old Temple	1864-74	Navaratna
Ramjibanpur (Chandrakona)	Bankarai Temple (Baburampur Bajar)	1820 AD	Atchala
	Radhadamodar Temple (Chanda family)	19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
	Damodar Temple (Piri Family)	1831 AD	Pancharatna
	Sridharlaljiu Temple (Piri Family)	Early 19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
	Damodar Temple (Pramanik family)	1840 AD	Pancharatna
	Damodar Temple (Dutta Family)	1814 AD	Pancharatna
	Lakshmi Janardan Tample (Sinha Family)	1814 AD	Chandi
Laskardighi (Panskura)	Raghunath Temple	1796 AD	Navaratna
Laoda (Daspur)	Bankarai Temple	1801 AD	Navaratna
Lalgarh (Binpur)	Radhamadhab Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Jor Bangla
	RadhamohanTemple	do	Chandni
Loada (Debra)	Radhakrishna Temple	1805 AD	Pancharatna
Shyamsundarpur (Chandrakona)	Radhakrishna Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Pancharatna
	Vishnu Temple	1813 AD	Pancharatna
Sridharpur (Daspur)	Raghunath Temple	Late 19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
	Nilkanta Siva Temple	1846 AD	Pancharatna
	Rashmancha	Mid 19th Cent AD	Navaratna
Satyapur (Debra)	Rashmancha	Early 19th Cent AD	Navaratna
Sonakhali (Daspur)	Panchanan Temple	1773 AD	Atchala
	Baneshwar Temple	1819 AD	Atchala
Saulan (Daspur)	Shyamsundar Temple	Mid 19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Habibpur (Midnapur)	Damodar Temple	1805-06 AD	Pancharatna
Harinagoria (Ghatal)	Visheswar Siva Temple	Late 19th Cent	Rekha (Saptaratha)

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Harirampur (Daspur)	Sitalananda Siva Temple	Mid 19th Cent	Atchala
Harekrishnapur (Panskura)	Sridharjiu Temple	1854 AD	Navaratna
do	Rashmancha	1856 AD	Octagonal
			Navaratna
Kotalpur (Daspur)	Sridharjiu Temple	1823 AD	Panchanatra
	Adjacent Rashmancha	Same period	Navaratna
Amalpur (Keshpur)	Buroshiva Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Saptratha Sikhara
Amodpur (Debra)	Sitaranjui Temple	Mid 19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
	Raghunath Temple	1819 AD	Pancharatna
Alangiri (Egra)	Raghunathjiu Temple	1810 AD	Navaratna
	Adjacent Rashmancha	do	Octagonal
Yakubpur (Ghatal)	Old Temple (Pan family)	Mid 19th Cent AD	Chandni
	Radhunath Temple (Ghosh family)	do	Pancharatna
Iswarpur (Ghatal)	Sridharjiu Temple (Ghosh family)	Mid 19th Cent AD	Chandni (Pancharatha)
Udaiganj (Ghatal)	Sitaram Temple	1864 AD	Trayodas Ratna
	Sridharnath Jiu Temple (Krishnapur pally)	1877 AD	Navaratna
	SimhaVahini Temple (Hazra family)	1827 AD	Pancharatna
Erapur (Panskura)	Ramanarda Goswami Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Sikhara (Triratha)
	Adjacent Jagmohan		Dochala
Ereti (Daspur)	Brindabanbehari Jiu Temple (Manna family)	Mid 19th Cent AD	Chandhi
	Adjacent Rashmancha	do	Navaratna
Karkai Sivram (Debra)	Lakshmi Varaha Temple	1867 Cent AD	Navaratna
Kotaboni (Panskura)	Laxmijanardan Temple	1821 AD	Pancharatna
Kadilpur (Daspur)	Raghunath and Gopaljiu temple	1799 AD	Pancharatna
Kotalpur (Daspur)	Sridharjiu Temple	1813 AD	Pancharatna
	Adjacent Rasmancha	do	Navaratna
Kolanda (Sabang)	Shyamsundar Temple	Late 18th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Kharor (Khejuri)	Maharudreswar Siva Temple	Mid 18th Cent AD	Sikhara
Gopalpur (Patashpur)	Radhamadhaba Temple	Mid 19th Cent	Ekratna

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Chamka (Kharagpur)	Sridharjiu Temple	1856 AD	Navaratna
Janardanpur (Daspur)	Sitaramjiu Temple	1814 AD	Sikhava
Jaykrishnapur (Debra)	Bankura Rai Dharma Temple	1815 AD	Atchala
Jamna (Pingla)	Old Temple (Dinda family)	Early 19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Jyotmuri (Daspur)	Gangadhar Siva Temple	1828 AD	Atchala
Dianpur (Debra)	Raghunath Temple	1804 AD	Pancharatna
	(Chakraborty family)	do	Octagonal
	Adjacent Rashmancha		
Teparapara (Patashpur)	Lakshmi Janardan jiu Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Charchala
Talbandi (Garbeta)	Radha Damodar Temple	Late 19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
	(Dey family)		
Talbandi (Debra)	Radhaballavjiu Temple	1863 AD	Pancharatna
	(Goswami family)		
Dubrajpur (Sabang)	Lakshmijanardan Temple	1811 AD	Navaratna
Deuli (Panskura)	Siddheswar Siva Temple	1720 AD	Charchala
Palaspai (Daspur)	Sridharjiu Temple	1834 AD	Sikhara (Saptaratha)
	Rashmancha	1836 AD	Navaratna
Palasi (Debra)	Lakshmi Janardan Temple	1824 AD	Chandni
Pathra (Midnapore)	Three Siva Temples	1816 AD	Atchala
Palpara (Patashpara)	Kishorjiu Temple	Early 18th Cent	Navaratna
Fakirbajar (Daspur)	Sitala Temple	1848 AD	Pancharatna
Barakalankai (Narayangarh)	Radhamadhabjiu Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Sihar+Jagmohan
Barisha (Pingla)	Radhabinodjiu Temple	do	Pancharatna
Baliharpur (Daspur)	Radhagobinda Temple	1757 AD	Ek Ratna
	of Roy Family		
	Brajaraj Kishor Temple	1772 AD	Ek Ratna
Baghrui (Keshpur)	LakshmiJanardan (Janapara)	1772 AD	Pancharatna
	Tample		
Baranga (Ramnagar)	Radhaballav Rai	Early 19th Cent AD	Chandni
	Thakurjiu Temple		
Balipota (Daspur)	Damodar Temple	Mid 19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Madhyabarh (Pingla)	Lakshmi Janardan Temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Pancharatna
Mohanpur (Mohanpur)	Jagannath Temple	Mid 19th Cent AD	Ekratna
	Lakshmi Janardan Temple	Mid 19th Cent AD	Atchala
Jamuna-Vaishnavchak (Debra)	Sridharjiu Temple	1861 AD	Ekratna
Rajhati (Panskura)	Jugal kishore temple	Early 19th Cent AD	Sikhara
Ranir Bajar (Ghatal)	Shyamraijiu Temple	1693 AD	Ekratna
	Damodar Temple	1781 AD	Ekratna

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Location	Name of the Temple	Period of Construction	Nature of Temple
Ramkrishnapur (Daspur)	Brindaban Chandra Temple	1792 AD	Chandni
	Adjacent Rasmancha	do	Octagonal
Lakshmipur (Chandrakona)	Dayanath Siva Temple	1807 AD	Pancharatna
	Ramshundar Siva Temple	Mid 19th Cent	Atchala
Lachhipur (Ghatal)	Sridharjiu Temple	1856 AD	Navaratna
Shilda (Binpur)	Radhakrishna Temple	1876 AD	Chandni
Srirampur (Sabang)	LakshmiJanardan Temple	1870 AD	Pancharatna
Sarberia (Daspur)	SatyanarayanTemple	1837 AD	Navaratna
	Sridharjiu Temple	1872 AD	Chandni
Sagarpur (Daspur)	Damodarjiu Temple	Late 18th Cent	Ekratna
Samat (Daspur)	Raghunath Temple	1839 AD	Pancharatna
	Madangopal Temple	1878 AD	Chandni
Sarta (Sabang)	LakshmiJanardan Temple	1870 AD	Sikhara
Sahachak (Daspur)	Nilkantha Siva Temple	1888 AD	Atchala
Sahara (Pingla)	Raghunath Temple	1849 AD	Pancharatna
Suratpur (Daspur)	Sitalananda Temple	1849 AD	Pancharatna
Suranayanpur (Daspur)	Parvaatinath Siva Temple	1839 AD	Sikhara
	Sitalananda Siva Temple	1833 AD	Atchala
Sultanpur (Ghatal)	LakshmiJanardan Temple	1808 AD	Pancharatna

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APPENDICE—B

Description of the Exbibits

Colour

1. Siddheswar Siva Temple— Bahulara, Bankura— one of the earliest Rekha temples of outstanding merit—11th/12th Century AD.
2. Ajodhya Math, Kodla, Bagerhat, Khulna, Bangladesh- 16th/17th cent AD, Pancharatha Rekha.
3. Mathurapur Deul— Mathurapur, Faridpur, Bangladesh 16th/17th Cent AD— Octagonal Rekha.
4. Shyam Rai temple— Bishnupur, Bankura- 1643 AD.
5. Kantaji Temple— Astanar Kaharol, Kantanagar, Dinajpore, Bangladesh, 1704-22 AD.
6. Gopinath Radhagobinda Temple- Pabna, Bangladesh, 1607 AD, Jora Bangla.
7. Foliage in fresco painting at Vrindaban Chandra Temple, Guptipara, Hooghly, 18th Cent AD.
8. Nangto Shyamchander Mandir— Dharapat, Bishnupur, Bankura-Sarotabhadra Deul—15th/16th Cen AD.
9. Dancing Chaitanya— Fresco painting on Temple-Vrindaban Chandra Temple, Guptipara Hooghly, 18th cent AD.
10. Fresco Painting on temple— Rashleela (circular dancing)— Shyamsundarjiu Temple–Baharu, South 24 Parganas— 1821 AD.
11. Fresco Painting on temple— Princess at leisured moments— Shyamsundarjiu Temple—Baharu, South 24 Parganas— 1821 AD.
10. Fresco Painting on temple— Radha Krishna dancing with Gopinis— Shyamsundarjiu Temple, Baharu, South 24 Parganas— 1821 AD.
13. Contemporary social scenes— Kantaji Temple, Kantanagar, Dinajpore- 1704-22 AD.
14. Kartikeya slewing demons and Devi waging war against demoniac forces— Jorabangla temple Bishnupur, Bankura- 1655 AD.
15. Brahama on journey to war on vehicle drawn by goose and Devi fighting demoniac forces—Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD.
16. Bali and Sugriva fighting each other before the Ramayana war— Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 Ad.
17. Fish incarnation of Vishnu-Charbangla Temple, Barnagar, Murshidabad- 1750 AD.
18. War procession of indigenous soldiers— Ratneswar Temple, Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murshidabad 1745-50 AD
19. Ramayana Scenes on the arched projections of Ratneshwar Temple of Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murshidabad 1745-50 AD

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20. Devi Durga in usual family bond— Charbangla Temple, Barnagar, Murshidabad 1750 AD.
21. Images of Devi Durga and Ganesha— Radhavinod Temple, Purbagopalpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1774 AD.
22. Eighteen armed Goddess Durga-Radhdamodar temple, Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1859 AD.
23. Boyhood scenes of lord Krishna- Lalji Temple, Ambika Kalna, Bardhaman, 1730 AD.
24. Rashmandala- Ananta Vasudeva Temple, Bansberia, Hooghly, 1679 AD.
25. Child Krishna killing demon Putana— Lalji Temple, Ambika Kalna, Bardhaman, 1730AD.
26. Child Krishna in mother lap- Lakshmi Janardan Temple, Debipore, Memari, Bardhaman 1844 AD.
27. Restless child Krishna being managed by Jashoda- Lakshmi Janardan Temple, Debipore, Memari, Bardhaman- 1844 AD.
28. Child Krishna as a cowboy— Lakshmi Janardan Temple, Debipore, Memari, Bardhaman- 1844 AD.
29. Child Krishna as slayer of demons- Gopinath Temple, Dasghara, Hooghly- 1729 AD.
30. Krishna among Gop women in celebration of Holi festival— Gopinath Temple, Dasghara, Hooghly- 1729 AD.
31. Krishna's feet being washed by the devotee Gop women— Gopinath Temple, Dasghara, Hooghly– 1729 AD.
32. Krishna fighting out demon appearing in the guise of elephant– Gopinath Temple, Dasghara, Hooghly 1729 AD.
33. Krishna in dancing action as a flute player– Gopinath Temple, Dasghara, Hooghly 1729 AD.
34. Radha and Krishna in emotional posture at Vrindavana garden— Lakshmi Janardan Temple, Ajuria, Panskura, Midnapore 1870 AD.
35. Jashoda churning curds– Lakshmi Janardan Temple, Ajuria, Panskura, Midnapore– 1870 AD.
36. Krishna raring cows as a cowboy– Lakshmi Janardan Temple, Ajuria, Panskura, Midnapore 1870 AD.
37. Krishna disguishing as boatman sailing across the River Jamuna with Gop women– Braja Kishore Temple- Baliharpur, Daspur, Midnapore– 1772 AD.
38. Krishna killing serpent Kaliya– Lakshmi Janardan Temple of Pal family, Daspur, Midnapore- 1791 AD.
39. Therianthropic image of a deer– human combine in syncretist order– Lakshmi Janardan Temple of Pal family, Daspur, Midnapore 1791 AD.
40. Krishna in divine power as slayer of demons-Radhdamodar Temple, Mangloi shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1859 AD.
41. An amorous couple— Banka Rai temple, Laoda, Daspur, Midnapore 1801 AD.
42. Rich men on pleasure sail on a boat- Radhamodar Temple, Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1859 AD.

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43. An ascetic playing a musical instrument– Banka Rai temple, Laoda, Daspur, Midnapore– 1801 AD.
44. Women in Europian costumes– Pratepswar Temple, Ambika Kalna, 1849 AD.
45. Ramayana war scenes on Radhadamodar Rashmancha, Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1859 AD.
46. Churning of ocean by the Devas and Rakshasas– Radhadamodar Rashmancha, Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore, 1859 AD.
47. Ramayana panels including coronation of Rama-Sita on the throne of Ayodhya– Radhadamodar Rashmancha, Mangloi-shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore- 1859 AD.
48. Panels of Krishnaleela episodes on Radhadamodar Rashmancha, Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1859 AD.
49. A syncretist version of Devi Kalika-Radhadamodar Temple of Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura– Late 18th Cent AD.
50. The target of fish eye in circular panel in the marriage court of Draupadi at Damodar Temple, Hadalnarayanpur, Patrassyer, Bankura- Late 18th Cent AD.
51. Arjuna targeting the fish eyes with the arrow thrown out of his bows in the marriage court- Damodar Temple, Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer Bankura– Late 18th Cent AD.
52. Siva playing horn flute– Gangagobinda Temple, Hadlnarayanpur, Patrasayer Bankura— Late 18th Cent AD.
53. Ganesh sitting on his vehicle Mushika— Damodar Temple, Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura— Late 18th cent AD.
54. Kirtana Dancer— Gangagobinda temple, Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura, Late 18th Cent AD.
55. Jagannatha replacing Buddha within the ten incarnation of Vishnu-Damodar Temple of Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura— Late 18th cent AD.
56. Dancing Radha Krishna in uncommon costumes— Dewaniji Temple, Hetampur, Dubrajpur, Birbhum– Mid 19th Cent AD.
57. Common appearance of English personalities and contemporary daily life– Chandranath Siva Temple, Hetampur, Dubrajpur, Birbhum– 1847 AD.
58. Common appearance of English personalities and local cult deities as well as daily life— Chandranath Siva Temple, Hetampur, Dubrajpur, Birbhum– 1847 AD.
59. Local women in English costumes— Dewanji Temple, Hetampore, Dubrajpur, Birbhum Mid 19th Cent AD.
60. Fish incarnation of lord Vishnu— Radhadamodar Temple of Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1859 AD.
61. Parasurama as incarnation of lord Vishnu— Radhadamodar Temple of Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1859 AD.
62. Balarama as incarnation of lord Vishnu— Radhadamodar Temple of Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1859 AD.
63. Kurma (Tortoise) incarnation of Lord Vishnu— Radhadamodar Temple of Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1859 AD.

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64. Tribikram or Bali incarnation of lord Vishnu-Radhadamodar Temple of Mangloi Shyamballavpore, Panskura, Midnapore 1859 AD.
65. A man piping a long flute- Damodar Temple, Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura—Late 18th Cent AD.
66. A man beating a ceremonial drum— Damodar Temple, Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura— Late 18th Cent AD.
67. Women looking outside through the windows— Damodar Temple, Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura— Late 18th Cen AD.
68. Mother and child looking out from the interiors— Damodar Temple, Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura— Late 18th Cent AD.
69. Creeper of death— Damodar Temple, Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura— Late 18th Cent AD.
70. Europian soldiers marching accompanied by hunting dogs— Radhagobinda Temple, Antpur, Hooghly— 1786 AD.
71. Krishna slaying demons in the guise of crane and buffalo— Radhagobinda Temple, Antpur, Hooghly— 1786 Ad.
72. A dancing scene— Dadhimadhab Temple of Amaragari, Howrah— 1764 AD.
73. A show of the tribal acrobats in martial actions— Radhagobinda Temple, Antpur, Hooghly 1786 AD
74. A court singer in performing action—Dadhimadhab Temple of Amaragari, Howrah— 1764 AD.
75. A royal servant and a flute player— Dadhimadhab Temple of Amaragari, Howrah— 1764 AD.

Black and white

76. Rashmandala (Circular dancing of Gopinis with Radha and Krishna at the centre) Shyam Rai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD.
77. Child Krishna in family bond and performing supernatural acts— Damodara Temple, Anandapur, Godapiyasal, Midnapore-1868-69 AD.
78. Rashmandala at Vishnu Temple at Kadasole, Barjora, Bankura 1805-10.
79. Courtmen at the Royal court— Sitalananda Siva Temple, Suratpur, Daspur, Midnapore-1849 AD.
80. The assassination of Sindhumani by King Dasaratha and other scenes-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura— 1655 AD
81. The coronation of Krishna as king of Mathura— Madanmohan Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura- 1694 AD.
82. Radha and Krishna in emotional posture— Madanmohan Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1694 AD.
83. Child Krishna exerting his supernatural passion and power as protector-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1655 AD.

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84. Child Krishna exerting his supernatural passion and power as protector– Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1655 AD.
85. Krishna in the guise of boatman on Jamuna River (Naukavilash)— Sridharjiu Temple, Chamka, Khragpur, Midnapore -1856 AD.
86. Balaram-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD.
87. Child Krishna as cowboy-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD.
88. Radha Krishna in dancing action— Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1643 AD
89. Krishna and Balarama in different dancing postures (with flute being played)— Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura - 1643 AD.
90. Krishna in different dancing postures with flute being played Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD
91. Vishnu fighting Indra for getting possession of the Parijat tree-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD.
92. Krishnaleela scenes of earthly passions-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD.
93. Radha Krishna in Danleela-Madanmohan Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1694 AD.
94. Devotees offering worship to their cult deity– Madanmohan Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1694 AD.
95. Dancers in action-Madanmohan Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1694 AD.
96. Krishna in sentimental interactions with Radha-Madanmohan Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1694 AD.
97. The scene of Krishna's birth-Vasudev taking away newly born Krishna out of Kamsa's wrath- Madanmohan Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura - 1694 AD
98. Krishna appeasing aggrieved Radha-Madanmohan Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1694 AD
99. Vastraharan-Krishna salvaging the wearing cloth of the Gopinis-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD
100. Child Krishna in mother's affection-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1655 AD
101. Krishna in his Vrindavana Garden acting with the Gopinis-Radhabinod (Kharbangla) Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1659 AD.
102. King Dasaratha finding Sindhumani assasinated with his arrow-Pratapeswar Temple, Kalna, Bardhaman— 1849 AD.
103. Lord Vishnu with Garuda as vehicle leading to a battle-Radhbinod (Kharbangla) Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1659 AD.
104. Sugriva in his Kiskindha empire– Gopinath Temple, Dasghara, Hooghly 1729 AD.
105. Ramayana War and trimurthi form of Siva and twenty armed goddess Durga— Sridhar Temple, Sonamukhi, Bankura, 1845 AD.
106. Rama breaking Hara Dhanu (divine bow) and the massive bow being carried by the servants-Ramchandra Temple, Guptipara, Hooghly-18th Cent AD.
107. Mahabharata scenes of Arjuna targeting eyes of fish and divine acts of child Krishna-Radhadamodar Temple, Mangloi. Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore-1859 AD.
108. God Indra, Brahma and others appearing in panel-Sridhara Temple, Sonamukhi, Bankura-1845 AD.

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109. Marriage scene of Siva-Sridhara Temple, Sonamukhi, Bankura-1845 AD
110. Child Krishna being bathed by his mother and other gop women-Ramchandra temple, Guptipara, Hooghly-18th Cent AD.
111. Goddess Durga proceeding towards her annual visit to paternal house alongwith her kids and a panel of dancing Radha Krishna— Sridhara Temple, Sonamukhi, Bankura-1845 AD.
112. Devotee paying worship to goddess Kali—Sridhara Temple, Sonamukhi, Bankura-1845 AD.
113. Five Pandavas and Draupadi-Sridhara Temple, Sonamukhi, Bankura- 1845 AD
114. A local mythological version probably of lord Vishnu alongwith other accomplices– Sridhara Temple, Sonamukhi, Bankura-1845 AD
115. Coronation of Rama and Sita on the throne of Ajodhya-Sridhara Temple, Sonamukhi, Bankura-1845 AD
116. Krishnaleela scenes- Sridhara Temple, Sonamukhi, Bankura-1845 AD
117. Goddess Kali-Sridhara Temple, Sonamukhi, Bankura 1845 AD
118. Coronation of Rama and Sita on the throne of Ajodhya-Vishnu Temple, Kadasole, Barjora, Bankura 1805-10.
119. Various social and ritual scense including celebration of Charak festival— Gopinath temple, Radhakantapur, Daspur-Late 18th Cent AD.
120. Ramayana war– Gopinath Temple, Dasghara, Hooghly 1729 AD.
121. Churning of ocean and other mythological scenes-Damodar Temple, Jibta, Kotalpur, Bankura-1833 AD.
122. Panel of Dasavatar and Ramayana scenes- Ratneshwar Temple, Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murshidabad- Mid 18th cent AD.
123. The six armed Gouranga alongwith devotes-Charbangla Temple, Barnagar, Azimgunj, Murshidabad-1745-50 AD.
124. Ramayana scenes of Hanuman standing in folded hands before Rama Sita, Rama breaking Haradhanu (divine bow) and indigenous soldiers marching-Ratneshwar Temple, Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murshidabad-Mid 18th cent AD.
125. Movement of feudal nobilities and men fighting with hungry animals-Ratneshwar Temple, Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murtshibad-Mid 18th Cent AD.
126. Syncretist Trimurti of mediaeval version– Gopinath temple, Dasghara, Hooghly-1729 AD.
127. Cavalray movements alongwith horse rider and elephant rider troops—Ratneshwar Temple, Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murtshibad- Mid 18th Cent AD.
128. Mythological scenes of Shakuntala feeding a deer and other syncretist images. Gopinath temple, Dasghara, Hooghly 1729 AD.
129. Kirtana singers led by Chaitanyadev— Damodar Temple, Hadalnarayanpur, Bankura-Late 18th Cent AD.
130. Endless lying of Lord Vishnu (Anantasayi Vishnu)- Rashmancha at Hadalnarayanpur, Bankura Late 18th Cent AD.
131. Goddess Ganga and other deities- Damodar temple, Hadalnarayanpur, Bankura- Late 18th Cent AD.
132. Panel of plaques including that of Jashoda and child Krishna churning curds and specimen

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of profusely ornamented pillars– Ratneswar Temple, Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murtshibad-Mid 18th Cent AD.

133. Panels of Ramayana tales on the upper lintel space of Ratnashwar Temple, Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murtshibad-Mid 18th Cent AD.
134. Hanumana paying homage to Rama– Lakshmana and standing in folded hands before Rama-Sita-Ratneshwar Temple, Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murtshibad- Mid 18th Cent AD.
135. Profusely ornamented pillars, niches, arches, brackets, angles at the exteriors of the Ratneshwar Temple, Bhattamati, Nabagram, Murtshibad-Mid 18th Cent AD.
136. Five Pandava sons assassinated by Kauravas at the concluding stage of the great epic war-Madanmohan temple-Bishnupur, Bankura-1694 AD.
137. Aryuna on his chariot engaged in Kurukshetra war- Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD
138. Different scenes of Ramayana and Mahabharata war- Madanmohan temple- Bishnupur, Bankura-1694 AD.
139. King Dasaratha in front of the blind saint with assassinated Sindhumani-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD.
140. King Dasaratha with his four sons approaching Parasurama for arms training– Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1655 AD
141. Coronation of Rama and Sita on the throne of Ayodhya-Dewanji Temple, Hetampore, Birbhum-Mid 19th Cent AD.
142. Aryuna and Duryodhana waiting for Krishna's participation on their side before the Mahabharata war- Gopinath Temple-Dasghara, Hooghly-1729 AD.
143. Parasurama, the great epic warrior and saint-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD.
144. Bhairavi in local version-Banka Rai Temple– Laoda, Daspur, Midnapore— 1801 AD.
145. Balarama sounding a horn flute— Lakshmijanardan Temple of Pal family at Daspur, Midnapore-1791 AD.
146. Varaha Avatar (Boar incarnation) of Lord Vishnu-Radhavinod Temple of Purbagopalpur, Panskura. Midnapore 1774 AD.
147. The supreme gods- Siva and Brahma-Banka Rai temple– Laoda, Daspur, Midnapore— 1801 AD.
148. Matsya Avatar (Fish incarnation) of lord Vishnu-Radhavinod Temple of Purbagopalpur, Panskura, Midnapore-1774 AD.
149. Kurma Avatar (Tortoise incarnation) of Lord Vishnu-Radhavinod Temple of Purbagopalpur, Panskura, Midnapore- 1774 AD.
150. Narasimha Avatar (Man lion incarnation) of Lord Vishnu assasinating Hiranykashipu-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD.
151. The Varaha (boar) Avatara punishing sinners to lite the world-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD.
152. Kalki Avatara (Warrior priest riding on a horse) of Lord Vishnu-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1643 AD.

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153. Fish incarnation of Lord Vishnu-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD.
154. Parasurama or Rama Jamadagaya incarnation of Lord Vishnu-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD.
155. Tribikram or Bali Avatara (Dwarf) incarnation of lord Vishnu Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD.
156. Rama Dasarathi Avatara of Lord Vishnu-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura- 1643 AD.
157. Balarama or Baladeva incarnation of Lord Vishnu-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD.
158. Devi Matrika in Dasamahavidya forms-Chhinnamasta-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD.
159. Devi Matrika in Dasamahavidya forms-Kamala-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1643 AD.
160. Devi Matrika in Dasamahavidya forms-Kali-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD.
161. Devi Matrika in Dasamahavidya forms-Bagala-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1645 AD.
162. Goddess Kali in the revised version-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD
163. Yogini Matrikas-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD
164. Devi Matrikas-Vaishnavi-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD
165. Devi Matrika-Bhairavi-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1643 AD
166. Maheshwara on his vehicle bull-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD
167. Goddess Durga slaying Mahisasura-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD
168. Goddess Saraswati-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD
169. Lord Kartikeya-Shyamrai Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1643 AD
170. Lord Siva playing Vina accompanied by Parvati—Gopinath temple, Dasghara, Hooghly-1729 AD.
171. Goddess Saraswati playing Vina on her vehicle swan-Gopinath temple, Dasghara, Hooghly–1729 AD.
172. Marriage scene of Siva-Rashmancha, Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura-late 18th Cent AD.
173. Endless lying of lord Vishnu (Anantasayi Vishnu)- Rashmancha, Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura-late 18th Cent AD.
174. Gajalakshmi-Rashmancha, Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura-late 18th Cent AD.
175. Sivarama murthi and Harihara-Damodar temple, Hadalnarayanpur, Patrasayer, Bankura-Late 18th Cent AD.
176. Panels of the Ramayana Battle with Devi Durga at the centre Pratepeswar Temple, Ambika Kalna, Bardhaman-1849 AD.
177. Panels of Kirtana singers with Rama-Sita at the center-Pratepswar Temple, Ambika kalna, Bardhaman-1849 AD.
178. Scenes of Ramayana war and Nrisimha Avatar appearing as saviour of the world—Ramchandra Temple Guptipara, Hooghly-18th Cent AD.

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179. Goddess Jagatdhatri in a syncretist version— Pratepswar Temple, Ambika kalna, Bardhaman—1849 AD.
180. The images of Goddess Saraswati- Raghunathjiu Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum 1633 AD.
181. The images of Goddess Kali-Raghunathjiu Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum 1633 AD.
182. Devi Matrika-Goddess Tara-Raghunathjiu Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum 1633 AD.
183. Goddess Jagatdhatri with twin lions as vehicle-Siva Deul, Bamunpara, Ilambazar, Birbhum 1846 AD.
184. Rama-Sita at the court- Raghunathjiu Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum-1633 AD.
185. Maheshwara and Maheshwari riding vehicle Bull-Raghunathjiu Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum 1633 AD.
186. Devi Matrika-Goddess Bhubaneswari-Raghunathjiu Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum 1633 AD.
187. Goddess Lakshmi-Raghunathjiu Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum- 1633 AD.
188. Goddess Saraswati (Repeated)— Raghunathjiu Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum 1633 AD.
189. Hara-Parvati in passionate posture-Raghunathjiu Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum, 1633 AD.
190/1 Tribikram or Bali Avatar as saviour of the universe- Madanmohan temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1694 AD.
190/2 Rama Dasarathi as a Vishnu Incarnation-Madanmohan temple, Bishnupur, Bankura—1694 AD.
191. Nrisimha as incarnation of Vishnu slaying Hiranyakashipu-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura-1655 AD
192. Singer performing with wire instrument– Madanmohan temple, Bishnupur, Bankura—1694 AD.
193. The battle between God Ganesh and Parasurama-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura—1694 AD.
194. Singer performing with a hand instrument-Madanmohan temple, Bishnupur, Bankura—1694 AD
195. The coronation of Krishna on the throne of Mathura and a panel of Kirtana singers–Lakshmi Janardan Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum 1838 AD.
196. Horse rider nobility and escorting guards— Raghunathjiu Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum 1633 AD.
197. An ascetic-Raghunathjiu Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum 1633 AD.
198. Six armed Gouranga and other scenses of daily life-Pratapswar Temple, Ambika kalna, Bardhaman 1849 AD.
199. An indigenous soldier-Raghunathjiu Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum 1633 AD.
200. Elaborate scenes of Sri Krishna starting for Mathura leaving the memoris of Vrindavana behind-Dewanji Temple, Hetampur, Birbhum 19th Cent AD.
201. The Gop women repenting the departure of Krishna to Mathura-Dewanji Temple, Hetampur, Birbhum 19th Cent AD.
202. Women in the Royal court in costumes of europian influence— Chandranath Siva temple, Hetampore, Birbhum 1847 AD.
203. Men and women performing music with costumes under europian influence - Chandranath Siva temple, Hetampore, Birbhum 1847 AD.

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204. Brahma proceeding to battle on his vehicle swan and other mythological scenes-Janakiballav Temple, Tilantapara, Sabang, Midnapore 1811 AD.
205. A folk version of Goddess Kali popularly known as Krishnakali-Radhadamodar Temple, Khirpai, Midnapore 1817 AD.
206. The assassination of Marich-Khatial Siva Temple, Sultanpore, Shyampore, Howrah, Mid 17th cent AD.
207. Siva and Parvati with other attendants Vishnu Temple, Srirampore, Arambagh, Hooghly 19th Cent AD.
208. Woman cutting fish- Vishalakshi Temple, Eloma, Madhavpur, Arambagh, Hooghly 1733 AD.
209. Grandfather Bhishma on the bed of arrows before death at Kurakshetra War— Jora Bangla temple, Bishnupur, Bankura, 1655 AD.
210. Women operating Dheki (husking pedal) at home- Damodar temple, Kalyanpur, Baganan, Howrah-1786 AD. (Since non existent)
211. A barber dressing hair and a blacksmith hammering heated iron shaft-Damodar temple, Kalyanpur, Bagnan, Howrah 1786 AD. (Since non existent)
212. The affluent way of life of the feudal nobility-Sridharjiu Temple, Jaipur, Amta, Howrah, 1729 AD.
213. Woman operating Charka (spinning wheel) Gopinath temple, Dasghara, Hooghly, West Bengal 1729 AD
214. A woman playing Vina— Gopinath temple, Dasghara, Hooghly, West Bengal 1729 AD.
215. An affluent woman in glamorous costumes— Gopinath temple, Dasghara, Hooghly, West Bengal 1729 AD.
216. A military band probably celebrating a festive occasion-Gopinath Temple, Dasghara, Hooghly, West Bengal 1729 AD.
217. A troupe of Kirtana singers- Gopinath temple, Dasghara, Hooghly, West Bengal 1729 AD.
218. A man knotted by ropes for punishment— Radhavinod temple, Purbagopalpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1774 AD.
219. A man probably a soldier smoking Hukkah- Radhavinod temple, Purbagopalpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1774 AD.
220. Erotic scenes— Radhavinod temple, Purbagopalpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1774 AD.
221. Erotic scencs— Radhavinod temple, Purbagopalpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1774 AD.
222. Child Krishna as slayer of demons-Shyamsundarjiu Temple of Madhyapara, Jhikhira, Amta, Howrah 1691 AD.
223. An official probably designated with important assignments-Radhadamodar temple of Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1859 AD.
224. Erotic action- Shyamsundarjiu Temple of Madhyapara, Jhikhira, Amta, Howrah 1691 AD.
225. Leisured moments of rich men and other mythological scenes-Shyamsundarjiu Temple of Madhyapara, Jhikhira, Amta, Howrah, 1691 AD.
226. Rama-Lakshmana on chariot on way to Palace-Sitaram temple, Ghoshpara, Jhikhira, Amta, Howrah-1700 AD.

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227. Child Krishna as slayer of demons-Shyamsundarjiu Temple of Madhyapara, Jhikhira, Amta, Howrah-1691 AD.
228. Ramayana scenes of Rama-Lakshmana appearing in various encounters-Sitaram temple, Ghoshpara, Jhikhira, Amta, Howrah-1700 AD.
229. Child Krishna as slayer of demons– Sitaram temple, Ghoshpara, Jhikhira, Amta, Howrah-1700 AD.
230. Yama Raja-Shyamsundarjiu Temple of Madhyapara, Jhikhira, Amta, Howrah 1691 AD
231. Child Krishna in restless moments-Shyamsundarjiu Temple of Madhyapara, Jhikhira, Amta, Howrah 1691 AD
232. The Mangala tales and other social scens-Radhadamodar Rashmancha, Mangloi Shyamballavpur, Panskura, Midnapore, 1859 AD.
233. Decorative motif of human face and creepers- Damodar temple, Antpur, Hooghly- late 18th cent AD.
234. A tribal showman alongwith his mask-Pratapeswar temple, Ambika kalna, Bardhaman 1849 AD.
235. Child Krishna in the mother lap- Lakshmijanardan temple, Debipore, Memari, Bardhaman-1844 AD.
236. Potraiture of English celebrities and daily life-Chandranath Siva temple, Hetampore, Birbhum- 1847 AD.
237. British Royal enblems and daily life of the British people- Chandranath Siva temple, Hetampore, Birbhum 1847 AD.
238. Panels showing British Royal enblem, daily life of the British people and a chain of portraits etc. Chandranath Siva temple, Hetampore, Birbhum 1847 AD.
239. A band of musicians— Dewanji temple, Hetampore, Birbhum Mid 19th Cent AD.
240. A panel of ascetics- Radhagovinda temple. Antpur, Hooghly 1786 AD.
241. Creeper of death Gopinath temple, Dasghara, Hooghly-1729 AD.
242. Creeper of death-Radhagovinda temple. Antpur, Hooghly 1786 AD.
243. A panel showing certain local deities and ascetics Radhagovinda temple, Antpur, Hooghly 1786 AD.
244. Eupopian soldiers marching ahead— Gopinath temple of Sinha family, Daspur, Midnapore 1716 AD.
245. A native offender being punished thrown before a hungry tiger by the Europian master-Tulshimancha of De family, Gambhirnagar, Ghatal, Midnapore 1812 AD.
246. Native servants in service of their Europian master and indigenous soldiers— Tulshimancha of De family, Gambhirnagar, Ghatal, Midnapore 1812 AD.
247. Feudal nobility travelling on a chariot escorted by guards and servants-Bhubaneshwari Temple, Mahishamuri, Amta, Howrah-1679 AD.
248. An aristocrat being carried on a palenquen— Gokulchand Temple, Santipore, Nadia— 1740 AD.
249. A large boat with traditional twelve oars-Radhakrishna Jorabangla temple, Birnagar, Nadia 1649 AD.

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250. An Europian smoking with a gadget on a pleasure sail-Sitaramjiu temple, Amodpur, Debra, Midnapore Mid 19th cent AD.
251. Europian pirates possibly slave traders sailing on a large vessel-Radhagobinda Temple, Chechua-Gobindanagar, Daspur, Midnapore 1781 AD.
252. Kamalekamini appearing before Chand Sadagar-Shyamsundar temple, Saulan, Daspur, Midnapore-Mid 19th cent AD.
253. A convoy probably with a Zaminder on the leisured aristocracy on chariot, horses, elephants and servants moving— Kantaji temple, Astanor Kaharol, Kantanagar, Dinajpore, Bangladesh 1704-22 AD.
254. An elaborate palenquin with an aristocrat possibly a Zaminder inside engaged in fancy smoking through a valuable smoking gadget-Kantaji temple, Astanor Kaharol, Kantanagar, Dinajpore, Bangladesh 1704-22 AD.
255. A massive luxary boat carrying highly designated aristocrat engaged in leisured smoking accompanied by women, servants at Kantaji temple, Astanor Kaharol, Kantanagar, Dinajpore, Bangladesh 1704-22 AD.
256. A soldier engaged in examination of certain objects— Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD.
257. A horserider soldier in movement alongwith a hunter dog— Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD.
258. A tiger with its cub-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD
259. Hanumana fighting Rakshasas in the ramayana War- Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD.
260. Various contemporary dance motifs-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura- 1655 AD.
261. Elephants fighting-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD
262. A soldier moving out his horse-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD
263. An affluent person sitting relax fanning himself-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD
264. A soldier with sword and shield in action-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD
265. An affluent person in leisured aristocracy-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD.
266. Rows of different animal and therianthropic motifs and soldiers in action-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD
267. A seated aristocrat young man in action of arguments-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD
268. Rama and Lakshmana offering worship for winning battle-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD.
269. An affluent person enjoying company of woman-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD.
270. Two priests of the contemporary social order Pratepeswar temple, Ambika kalna, Bardhaman 1849 AD.

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271. The Englishmen drivers driving Railway engine-Raghunath Vishnu temple, Anandapur, Godapiyasal, Midnapore 1892 AD.
272. A specimen of profusely ornamented pillar at Hatkhola Octagonal Temple, Ilambazar, Birbhum, early 19th Cent AD.
273. Sculptural arrangements on a section of a exterior walls Jorabangla Kali Temple, Itanda, Bolpur, Birbhum early 19th cent AD.
274. Contemporary feudal life-Jora Bangla Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura 1655 AD
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315. Europian soldiers on move with guns in hand-Sitaram temple, Ghoshpara, Jhikhira, Howrah 1776 AD.
316. Europian soldiers in hunting actions-Damodarjiu temple, Kararpara, Jhikhira, Howrah-1776 AD.
317. An affluent person being carried on palenquin— Shyamsundarjiu Temple, Madhyapara, Jhikhira, Howrah-1691 AD.
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319. Europian soldiers lined up for parade— Abandoned temple, Gayenprara, Khirpai, Midnapore— Late 18th cent AD.
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330. Large solid terracotta figures of Musicians beside the entry gates of Lakshmijanardan Rashmancha, Ajuria, Panskura, Midnapore- 1870AD
331. Large solid terracotta figures of Musicians beside the entry gates of Lakshmijanardan Rashmancha, Ajuria, Panskura, Midnapore- 1870 AD.
332. Solid terracotta figures of Door keepers in europian uniform with guns as arms beside the entry gate of Lakshmijanardan Rashmancha, Ajuria, Panskura, Midnapore 1870 AD.
333. Large figure of a woman beating drums appearing on the entry gate of Sridharjiu Rashmancha at Gaura, Panskura, Midnapore- 1821 AD.
334. Doorkeeper on the entry gate of Radhavinod Rashmancha, Purbagopalpur, Panskura, Midnapore 1774 AD.

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335. An exceptional decorative motif of vegetal and animal combine at Rashmancha, Debipore, Memari, Bardhaman- Mid 19th Cent AD.
336. An aristocrat relaxing man in smoking actions— Pratepeswar Temple, Ambika Kalna, Bardhaman- 1849 AD.
337. A musical band- Ramchandra Temple, Guptipara, Hooghly— 18th cent AD.
338. Child Krishna with affectionate Gop woman, who is eventually shown in Europian costume— Pratepswar Temple, Ambika Kalna, Bardhaman— 1849 AD.
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340. A profusely sculpted wooden temple door— Sridharjiu Temple, Kotalpur, Daspur, Midnapore— 1813 AD.
341. Minutely engraved wooden pillars of Chandimandap, Sripur, Balagarh, Hooghly- 1707 AD.
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346. Wooden sculptures of various divine images at Chandimandapa, Sripur, Balagarh, Hooghly 1707 AD.
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Note– *Due to exigencies of presentations not only of subjects, but also of different forms, it has not been possible to arrange the exhibits sectionwise. The exhibits have been arranged in accordance with the possible templewise, areawise, motifwise characters and in many cases the same subject has been repeated at different places to show depth of art practices and necessarily the subjects have been broken up. The author sincerely regrets the inconveniences caused to the esteemed readers in this regard.*

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